

# PLEASE NOTE TIME

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AGENDA



**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

**at 4.00 pm**

**at Owton Manor Community Centre,  
Wynyard Road, Hartlepool**

**MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM:**

Councillors Brash, S Cook, Fleet, Griffin, Laffey, London, Preece, Rogan, Shaw ,  
M Waller and Young

**Co-opted Members:**

Elizabeth Barraclough, David Relton and Jesse Smith

Leigh Bradley, Kelly Goulding, Cassie Jeffries, Gillian Pounder, Hannah Shaw ,  
Jonathan Simpson, Leon Smith

**Resident Representatives:**

John Cambridge, Evelyn Leck and Michael Ward

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 3. MINUTES**
  - 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and 19<sup>th</sup> March 2007

# PLEASE NOTE TIME

4. **RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No items.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No items.

6. **CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No items.

7. **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

7.1 The Provision of Sex and Relationship Education in Hartlepool – Draft Final Report – *Chair Children's Services Scrutiny Forum*

7.2 Joint Area Review Outcomes – *Director of Children's Services*

7.3 Raising Boys' Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap – Closing the Loop Report – *Director of Children's Services*

8. **ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

**Date of Next Meeting:-**

Monday, 11th June 2007 at 4.00pm at Owton Manor Community Centre, Wynyard Road, Hartlepool.

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

## **MINUTES**

26<sup>th</sup> February 2007

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Jonathan Brash, Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Frances London and Arthur Preece

In accordance with Paragraph 4.1 of the Council's procedure rules Councillor Carl Richardson attended as substitute for Councillor Shaun Cook.

### **Co-opted Members:**

Elizabeth Barraclough  
Leigh Bradley, Gillian Pounder, Hannah Shaw and Jonathan Simpson

### **Resident Representatives:**

John Cambridge and Evelyn Leck

### **Also Present** Deborah Gibbin, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator

Sandra Saint, Healthy Schools Co-ordinator  
Michael Kay, Service Manager, Teesside Positive Action  
Rita Nelson, Relate North East  
Jan Dobson, PATCH  
Debbie l'Anson, Parent representative

### **Officers:**

John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager  
Helen Sewell, Participation Officer  
Jonathan Wistow, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

## **74. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shaun Cook, Pauline Laffey and David Young and young person representatives Kelly Goulding, Cassie Jeffries and Leon Smith.

**75. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

**76. Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2007.**

Confirmed.

**77. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum**

None.

**78. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None.

**79. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents**

None.

**80. Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Evidence from Teesside Positive Action (TPA) (an SRE Partner Provider) (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)**

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed Members that the Service Manager from Teesside Positive Action had been invited to the meeting to provide information on the work undertaken by TPA in Hartlepool and how it interacted/co-ordinated with the local authority's current SRE provision and possible ways, if any, of improving SRE in Hartlepool.

The Service Manager gave a comprehensive and informative presentation detailing as follows the type of services and support given by TPA in conjunction with various groups and programmes:-

- (i) Emotional and practical support to those infected/affected by HIV and AIDS;
- (i) Education and training on HIV;
- (ii) Within the hour HIV testing;
- (iv) Advocacy;

- (v) Information, advice and awareness; and
- (vi) 24 Hour help line.

During the course of discussions on the work of TPA in Hartlepool it was noted that in terms of young people the main aim was to increase their levels of understanding of their bodies, help them to access the appropriate health care services and ensure that they feel comfortable enough to ask questions. Further issues were also discussed in terms of the work of the TPA as follows:-

- (i) **Does a positive result from a HIV test get double checked?** The Service Manager indicated that if a positive result was returned in the first instance, that person would be supported to undertake a visit to James Cook Hospital, Middlesbrough to have two further laboratory tests undertaken the next day.
- (i) **At what point was this programme introduced into secondary schools and what feedback is there to show that the message is getting across?** The Service Manager informed Members that it was mainly around years 9 and 10, 13 and 14 year olds, with year 9 concentrating on hygiene and relationship building and year 10 looking at sexual activities. The key issues focussed on during these sessions were the need to build up knowledge and raise awareness about sex and relationships and to inform young people what to do and where to go if problems do arise.

It was brought to Members attention that in France, sex and relationship education commences with young children aged 6 or 7 and is built upon as they grow. The Forum noted this and reiterated their concerns regarding the gap in SRE provision in Hartlepool schools between years 6 to 9 (age 10-13). It was agreed that bridging this gap was an area for improvement and attention was again drawn to the role of the year 11 questionnaire in obtaining feedback on the effectiveness of SRE provision from pupils of 15-16 years old.

- (ii) **Were parents informed that these sessions would be undertaken?** The Service Manager reported that the schools inform parents and sessions for parents were available, although they were not well attended.
- (iv) **In relation to teenage pregnancies, what would help the situation and lower the numbers?** The Service Manager suggested that making the language used during the delivery of 'Apause' more appropriate for young people may help. It was also suggested that ensuring the sessions were delivered in an informal way in order to provoke more questions could be a way forward.

In terms of the delivery of 'Apause' sessions the young people co-opted on to the Forum were of the view that it would be more relevant if the sessions were delivered by a younger person. Attention was also drawn

to the benefits of having form tutors present during the sessions.

- (v) **How often does TPA visit schools?** The Service Manager indicated that the sessions were first delivered in year 9 and then year 10 and every effort was made to ensure that the same person delivers both sessions with the aim of building up a rapport and connection with the young people.
- (vi) **Were the TPS sessions provided for youth groups?** The Service Manager indicated that they were happy to visit any groups or organisations that requested it. On these occasions, the TPA representative met with the leaders of the group to set boundaries and agree a lesson plan.
- (vii) **Why are TPA sessions not delivered to all schools?** The Service Manager informed Members that some schools chose not to participate for religious reasons and some schools provided sex and relationship education to a level that they could undertake themselves.
- (viii) **Would the inclusion of SRE as a compulsory part of the curriculum improve the level of knowledge among young people?** The Service Manager supported the view that the view that SRE should be a compulsory part of the curriculum. Whilst it was recognised that this would be difficult to achieve, as the curriculum was already crowded,, the Forum was interested to hear this as a view.

The representative from Teesside Positive Action was thanked for the very informative presentation and for answering Members questions.

### **Decision**

The presentation from Teesside Positive Action was noted and the issues discussed taken into consideration during formulation of the Forum's final report.

## **81. Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Evidence from PATCH (the Speak Easy Programme) (Scrutiny Support Officer)**

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed Members that the Training and Development Officer from PATCH (Parent and Toddler Care in Hartlepool) had been invited to the meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into the provision of sex and relationship education (SRE) for young people in Hartlepool schools.

The Training and Development Officer gave a comprehensive and detailed presentation to Members which explained the Speak Easy Programme for

parents. A parent who had been participating in the programme was also in attendance to provide the parental perspective. Members were informed that PATCH were a support organisation mainly for families with children under 5 but also provided a range of safety equipment including teenage pregnancy packs. The organisation currently worked with 200 families a week.

The Speak Easy Programme was a pilot programme developed by the Family Planning Association to help parents build upon their existing knowledge of what their children were being taught in schools. It was also to help build parents confidence in dealing with the SRE issue with their children and make sure that they know what their children's SRE needs are. The course was accredited to the open college network enabling parents to build up a portfolio of their learning with the ability to go out and help deliver the course in the future.

The parent in attendance informed Members that they had found the course extremely useful and agreed that it had been successful in its aim of boosting their confidence. Members were impressed with the content and intention of the course and indicated that they would be interested in receiving further feedback at the end of the first full course. The Training and Development Officer and parent representative indicated that they would be happy to come back and give the Forum a further feedback session in due course.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:-

- (i) **How many parents currently attended the Speak Easy Programme?** The Training and Development Officer indicated that there were 6 parents currently participating. The numbers were kept small as it was an intensive course.
- (i) **How effective were the arrangements and support for sex and relationship education?** The Training and Development Officer indicated that she was unsure exactly what was provided within schools, however, sex and relationship education was provided from week 1 on the Speak Easy programme in conjunction with the Healthy Schools Co-ordinator.
- (ii) **What involvement had school governors in the provision of sex and relationship education?** The Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator informed Members that the school governors had the responsibility of deciding what level of sex and relationship education was provided in their respective schools. The Health School Co-ordinator informed Members that she had met with the majority of school governing bodies and had undertaken a briefing session at a governors information sharing meeting. It was noted however, that the sessions could be improved to incorporate the transition of information on the way forward.
- (iv) **How do people find out about this programme?** The Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator indicated that this programme was initially

being piloted but would be utilised in a targeted approach. The Children's Fund Manager informed Members that work was beginning on a parenting strategy and this area will be a key issue.

### Decision

The presentation from PATCH and the discussion that followed would be used to inform Members to compile their final report.

## 82. Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Evidence from Relate (an SRE outside provider) (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed Members that a representative from Relate had been invited to the meeting to provide evidence in relation to the ongoing investigation into the provision of sex and relationship education (SRE) for young people in Hartlepool schools.

The representative from Relate informed Members that they had previously received funding from the Community Pool Budget and delivered a service to around 200 people in the area via schools and Connexions. A free telephone service was provided for young people from 11-25 year old, which had qualified counsellors to deal with any enquiries. The organisation worked with Surestart and their Time to Talk sessions were delivered as outreach courses within Hartlepool People's Centre. These sessions included delivering life skills and counselling in relation to problems encountered by parents with young children.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:-

- (i) **Members asked how would members of the public know that this service was available?** The representative from Relate indicated that the service was advertised as much as possible and was included within the Hartlepool Voluntary Development Agency.
- (i) **How was the success of the service evaluated?** Members were informed that client feedback was received via evaluation forms completed with a Monitoring Officer analysing the results.
- (ii) **Why was this service provided in the Hartlepool People's Centre?** The representative indicated that this venue was the most requested and was central to the town. The service provided was free although clients were asked to make a donation and it was more cost effective to use one venue.
- (iv) **How many people accessed this service?** The representative informed Members that there were 211 clients last year and included some repeat



sessions as some counselling would entail several sessions across a number of months.

The Forum was impressed with the possibilities for the use of the Time to Talk programme service in conjunction with 'A pause', as done in some other authorities (Sunderland), and it was suggested that the feasibility, and benefits, of its use in Hartlepool should be explored.

### **Decision**

The presentation from Relate and the discussion that followed would be used to inform Members to compile their final report.

## **83. Corporate Plan 2007/08: Proposed Objectives and Actions** (*Director of Children's Services*)

It was reported that at a meeting of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2007, it was agreed that the Corporate Plan proposals should be considered by each of the Scrutiny Forums which related to the Community Strategy themes that fell under their remit. The Assistant Director, Children's Services and the Principal Strategy Development Officer were in attendance to present a report which provided Members with the opportunity to consider the proposed objectives and actions for inclusion in the Corporate Plan 2007/08.

A discussion ensued in which the following issues were raised:-

- i) In relation to the general issue of performance indicators the Forum:

Expressed concern that schools were being 'over faced' and emphasised the importance of children rather than achieving targets;

Queried how 'value added' figures were utilised in the setting of targets and were advised that current BVPI's were based around actual figures and only looked at the high level of indicators; and

Highlighted that figures were not always clear as the percentages used can relate to small numbers. Using numbers could provide a more inaccurate picture.

- ii) In relation to children being taken out of school during term time to go on holiday, the Forum was advised of work being undertaken with local travel agents regarding an initiative to address the pricing of holidays during school holidays. Members were of the view that this work should be encouraged.
- iii) BVPI 38 to 41 - In relation to figures for the percentage of pupils' achievement, Members expressed concern regarding the setting of unrealistic targets for schools. The Forum was assured that targets were

set following validation of last year's figures and in conjunction with schools and school governors. It was also highlighted that the Corporate Strategy Team had a role setting in challenging targets that were felt to be realistic.

- iv) BVPI 197 - Disappointment was expressed that despite all of the work undertaken in Hartlepool in relation to the issue of teenage pregnancies the figures were still on the increase.
- v) LAA LLS6a to LAA LLS10c – The Forum expressed concern that targets for the NRS areas in Hartlepool were unrealistic as they relate to the most deprived areas of the town. It was, however, highlighted that this could be a way of highlighting areas where additional resources should be targeted across the town.

### **Decision**

- (i) That the proposed objectives and actions for inclusion in the 2007/08 Corporate Plan as attached at Appendix A, be agreed, subject to the above comments.
- (ii) That the above comments be presented to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 19 March 2007.

## **84. Scrutiny of the Progress of the Children and Young People's Plan (*Director of Children's Services*)**

The Assistant Director of Children's Services presented a report which informed Members of the progress in completing the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) and the outcomes of the first 6 monthly monitoring exercise. During the meeting of this Forum on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007, a number of interim findings/conclusions were reached. These included a number of specific actions which the Forum wished to see completed and progress on these was outlined within the report. A summary of the Plan had been produced in an A5 card format by the Hartlepool Young Voices and this was attached to the report. Members were informed that the Plan would become a vehicle for assessment under the Annual Performance Assessment. Members were informed that the introduction of new regulations had implications for the conducting of the review of the Plan and a further report would be submitted to this Forum once the new regulations were implemented.

As the young representatives of the Forum had left the meeting prior to this item being discussed, they were requested to let the Scrutiny Support Officer know if they had any comments on the Plan for consideration.

Members commended the Plan, however commented that the use of abbreviations should be examined as the six-monthly report provided did not contain an index explaining what the abbreviations were. The Assistant

Director of Children's Services indicated that although the abbreviations were listed in the full plan, the inclusion of this in the six-monthly report would be examined.

**Decision**

Members commended the Children and Young People's Plan subject to their comments noted above.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN

# **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

## **MINUTES**

19<sup>th</sup> March 2007

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm at Belle Vue Community, Sports and Youth Centre, Kendal Road, Hartlepool

### **Present:**

Councillor: Jane Shaw (In the Chair)

Councillors: Shaun Cook and Pauline Laffey.

### **Co-opted Members:**

Elizabeth Barraclough and David Relton

### **Resident Representatives:**

John Cambridge and Evelyn Leck

### **Young Person Representative:**

Leigh Bradley

### **Officers:**

John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager  
Sandra Saint, Healthy Schools Co-ordinator  
Deborah Gibbin, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator  
Joan Wilkins, Scrutiny Support Officer  
Angela Hunter, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Also Present David Messinger, SRE Co-ordinator, South Tyneside Council  
Beth Haw kridge, Barnardos

## **85. Inquorate Meeting**

It was noted that the meeting was inquorate.

## **86. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Mary Fleet, Sheila Griffin, Arthur Preece and David Young.

## **87. Declarations of interest by Members**

None.

**88. Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007**

Confirmed.

**89. Responses from the Council, the Executive or Committees of the Council to Final Reports of this Forum**

None.

**90. Consideration of request for scrutiny reviews referred via Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee**

None.

**91. Consideration of progress reports/budget and policy framework documents**

None.

**92. Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Hartlepool – Additional Information** *(PSHE and Healthy Schools Co-ordinator/Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator)*

The report provided additional information regarding the investigation into the provision of sex and relationship education in Hartlepool schools. A new programme was being developed to fill the gap in provision for year 7 to end in year 11 pupils. The programme was based on evidence from OFSTED which demonstrated that comprehensive and early SRE empowers and encourages young people to have sex later and use contraception when they do so. The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator indicated that a secondary school had agreed to pilot the new programme, combined with drug and alcohol awareness from September 2007 with a view to rolling this programme out across the town in September 2008.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) **Would experts from outside the Authority be used?** The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator indicated that during the pilot, the development of the programme would be the main objective. Best practice also indicated that the lead should be from school staff, although if it was felt that external people would add value, this would be considered through commissioning.
- (i) **Were all schools on board with the Lucinda and Godfrey resource?** The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator indicated that all schools bar one

were on board with this resource and that discussions were being held with the 1 remaining school. All schools were encouraged to take part in this programme and although the Authority could not insist that the school participates, the question of why not could be asked.

- (ii) **Was there any comparisons made with other authorities?** The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator responded that several similar authorities had formed a set of statistical partners for comparison purposes. The Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator added that the results from the APAUSE questionnaire were compared with other authorities and it appeared that Hartlepool were in a very similar position.
- (iv) **What impact had the APAUSE programme had?** The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator responded that the APAUSE programme was introduced in 1998 and Hartlepool had reached their target for the reduction in teenage pregnancies by 15% since 1994. However, nationally the target had not been achieved.
- (v) **What feedback had been given to Governing bodies?** The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator indicated that information had been fed back to the Co-ordinating Governing body. It was suggested that the Chair may wish to attend a meeting of this co-ordinating body and present the final report.
- (vi) **The young people consulted during this inquiry had indicated that they would prefer to be taught SRE from a younger person.** The Healthy Schools Co-ordinator indicated that teachers volunteered to be trained to teach SRE and this tended to be teachers in the younger age bracket. However, it was noted that the key issue was how the training was delivered and not by who.
- (vii) **Was there a peer element involved in SRE provision?** The Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator stated that a peer element could be included, however it was sometimes difficult to take peers away from their lessons to participate. A Member suggested that it may prove useful to involve peers who were studying in health and social care, as it could be beneficial to them as part of their own subject. The Children's Fund Manager indicated that the recent JAR inspection had identified poor mentoring and volunteering was an area that should be examined further.

### Decision

The above discussion would be used to inform Members formulate their final report.

## 93. **Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Evidence from South Tyneside Council** (*Scrutiny Support Officer*)

The Scrutiny Support Officer informed Members that the SRE Co-ordinator from South Tyneside Council was in attendance to provide evidence in

relation to the ongoing investigation into the provision of SRE for young people in Hartlepool schools. The SRE Co-ordinator gave a comprehensive and detailed presentation which promoted partnership working in relation to sex and drugs education. The partners involved included:

- PEP – Policy, Education and Prevention Team
- STAG Project – Support for young and gay and bisexual men
- Youth Service

It was noted that a training course was provided for people to enable them to become trainers and deliver SRE provision. To gain the level 1 qualification, particular areas of evidence needed to be provided and a workbook completed.

A discussion ensued which included the following issues:

- (i) **Was drug and alcohol advice given together?** The SRE Co-ordinator indicated that this advice was given simultaneously and included guidance on how young people should look out for each other. It was acknowledged that alcohol was by far the most widely used drug among young people.
- (i) **Why was drug and alcohol advice given at the same time as SRE?** The SRE Co-ordinator responded that the real skill in providing advice to young people was to be able to meet their needs and that the advice was combined because they could be a cause of risky behaviour. It was suggested that this advice could be given at alternative venues to schools ie on evenings by the youth service.
- (ii) **How were parents involved?** The SRE Co-ordinator stated that all parents were written to prior to this advice being provided and the response from parents varied.
- (iv) **Was there any training provided for people with learning disabilities?** The SRE Co-ordinator responded that special needs teaching was included, however this was not a separate qualification.

The SRE Co-ordinator was thanked for his presentation and for answering Members questions.

### **Decision**

The above discussion would be used to inform Members formulate their final report.

**94. Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Focus Group Feedback/Feedback from the Young People co-opted to the Forum in Relation to their Informal Survey**  
(Scrutiny Support Officer)

As part of the ongoing investigation, a Focus Group had been held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 to obtain the views of a selection of year 10 pupils and teachers, on the provision of SRE education in Hartlepool schools. Members noted that this Focus Group had proved extremely useful where a lot of useful information was gained from both pupils and teachers.

A representative from Barnardos had been invited to provide feedback to Members, along with the young people representatives, on the informal questionnaire that had been distributed among their peers. The young people had looked at the responses and had created a mind-map, which had been laminated and distributed to Members. The mind-map included information on what provision there was and the type of provision the young people felt they needed. There were several areas which the young people felt they needed more information and they included:

- Contraception
- Sexually transmitted diseases/symptoms
- 1-1 advice if required
- Demonstrations on how to use condoms

In relation to the level of information provided through SRE, there was some contradiction between teachers and pupils. While teachers felt that there was adequate information provided, some young people felt that they needed more.

The Chair indicated that the last few meetings had proved extremely useful as part of the evidence gathering for this inquiry. The Scrutiny Support Officer reminded Members that the next meeting of this Forum would be an informal meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 at 4.00pm at Throston Grange Community Centre.

**Decision**

That the above discussions would be used to help Members formulate their final report.

JANE SHAW

CHAIRMAN



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

16 April 2007



**Report of:** Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

**Subject:** DRAFT FINAL REPORT – SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROVISION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE) IN HARTLEPOOL SCHOOLS

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft findings of the Children's Scrutiny Forum following its investigation into the provision of sex and relationship education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools.

### 2. SETTING THE SCENE

- 2.1 There has over the last 12 years been a recorded deterioration of UK resident's sexual health, with increasing levels of teenage conceptions and sexually transmitted infections (STI's). In recognition of major national concern regarding this issue, growing emphasis was now being placed upon the importance of Sex and Relationship education (SRE) for young people.



- 2.2 In considering a subject for investigation the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum, at its meeting on the 12 June 2006, explored a variety of options. During the course of discussions concern was expressed regarding teenage conception and STI rates in Hartlepool and attention drawn to the importance of effective SRE as a tool to help improve the sexual health of the town's young people.
- 2.3 The issue of sexual health was not a new one for scrutiny in Hartlepool. An investigation into teenage pregnancy and associated issues had been undertaken in 2002; however, it had not focussed specifically on the way in which SRE was provided in Hartlepool. In view of the importance of SRE provision, the Forum was of the view that a full investigation into its provision

in Hartlepool should be undertaken. The 'Provision of Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) in Hartlepool Schools' was subsequently selected as an investigation to be undertaken as part of the Forum's 2006/07 Work Programme.

### **3. OVERALL AIM OF THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 3.1 The overall aim of the Scrutiny investigation was to review current practice in the provision of sex and relationship education (SRE) to young people in Hartlepool and suggest possible improvements.

### **4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION**

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny investigation were as outlined below:-

- (a) To gain an understanding of the sexual health issues affecting young people nationally and regionally;
- (b) To gain an understanding of the national and regional position relating to the provision of SRE for young people, with particular reference to:-
  - (i) National policy relating to the provision of sex and relationship education for young people.
- (c) To gain an understanding of, and examine, the local position relating to the provision of SRE for young people, with particular reference to:-
  - (i) The sexual health issues affecting young people in Hartlepool;
  - (ii) The strategies/practices being implemented in Hartlepool schools for the provision of SRE;
  - (iii) Effectiveness of strategies/policies being implemented in Hartlepool; and
  - (iv) Sources of advice outside schools and how outside bodies/agencies assist in the provision of SRE in Hartlepool.
- (d) To consider examples of best practice in other Local Authorities;
- (e) To compare strategies/practices implemented in other Local Authorities, and strategies/models identified nationally, with those being implemented in Hartlepool with a view to identifying possible areas of improvement; and
- (f) To seek the views of local residents, parents, children/young people and those working in schools on this issue.

## **5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

5.1 The membership of the Scrutiny Forum was as detailed below:-

**Councillors** Brash, S Cook, Fleet, Griffin, Laffey, London, Preece, Rogan, Shaw, MWaller and Young

**Resident Representatives:**

John Cambridge, Evelyn Leck and Michael Ward

**Co-opted Members:**

Elizabeth Barracrough, David Relton and Jesse Smith

**Young People Co-opted onto the Forum:**

Leigh Bradley, Kelly Goulding, Cassie Jeffries, Gillian Pounder, Hannah Shaw, Jonathan Simpson and Leon Smith

## **6. METHODS OF INVESTIGATION**

6.1 Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum met formally from 8 January 2007 to 16 April 2007 to discuss and receive evidence relating to this investigation. A detailed record of the issues raised during these meetings is available from the Council's Democratic Services.

6.2 A brief summary of the methods of investigation are outlined below:-

- (a) Detailed officer reports supplemented by verbal evidence;
- (b) Evidence from the Authority's Cabinet Member Portfolio Holder for Children's Services;
- (c) Questionnaire produced by the young people co-opted onto the Forum;
- (d) A Focus Group Session with Year 10 students, and teachers with responsibility for SRE, from schools across Hartlepool to obtain first hand views on the provision of SRE in Hartlepool;
- (e) Delivery of an SRE class to the Forum to illustrate the ways in which it is provided within Hartlepool schools;
- (f) Representatives from another Local Authority with examples of good practice (South Tyneside Council);
- (g) Evidence received from the United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) on their work in relation to SRE provision nationally;

- (h) Representatives from national and regional bodies. (Regional Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator and Regional Healthy Schools Co-ordinator);
- (i) Representatives from outside groups/bodies. (B76/Barnardos, Sure Start, Youth Service, the School Nursing Service, Relate, PATCH (Parent and Toddler Care in Hartlepool) and Teesside Positive Action; and
- (j) The views of the local community.

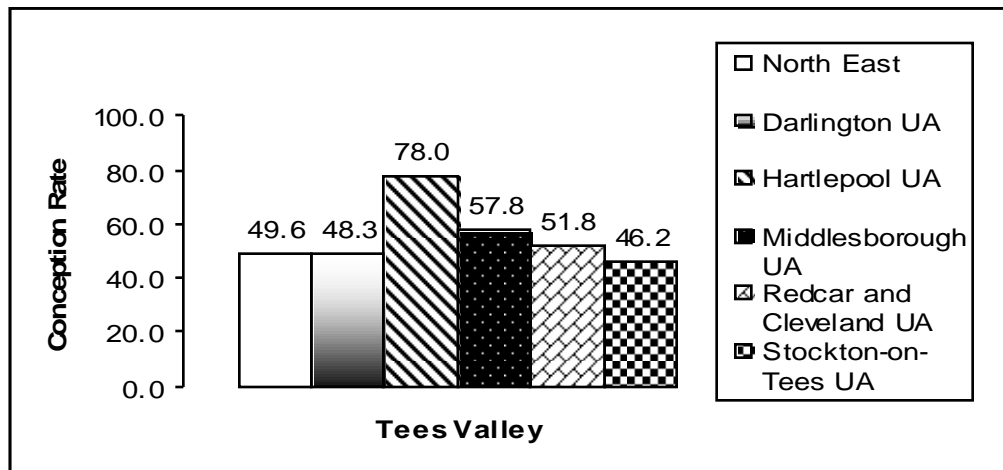
## FINDINGS

### 7. SEXUAL HEALTH ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE (NATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY)

- 7.1 As starting point for its investigation, the Forum learned that the key sexual health issues affecting young people in England were teenage pregnancy, termination of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The Forum also found of interest more detailed information on the extent of problems on a national and regional basis.
- 7.2 National Sexual Health Issues - The Forum noted the deterioration of sexual health in the UK over the last 12 years and expressed concern regarding the large increases in STI's (e.g. Chlamydia by over 300%, Gonorrhoea by over 200%) and the incidence of HIV (more than threefold).
- 7.3 On a more positive note, Members welcomed indications that since the introduction of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy, teenage pregnancy rates in England had fallen by 11.8% for under-18's and 12.1% for under-16's. Although national teenage pregnancies were at a 20 year low, Members were disappointed to learn that the UK still had the highest rate of teenage pregnancies in Western Europe. <sup>(i)</sup>
- 7.4 Regional – On a regional basis, the Forum was informed that the 2005 rate of under-18 conceptions in the North East was 49.6, compared to 41.1 nationally (England). <sup>(ii)</sup> Members were, however, encouraged to learn that the under-18 teenage pregnancy rate in the North East had fallen by 12.2% between 1998 and 2005. Although, it was noted that the North East rate was still 0.4% higher than the national figure over the same period.
- 7.5 The Forum found of interest figures for 2005 relating to the rate of under-18 conception across the Tees Valley (as summarised in **Table 1** overleaf) and noted with concern that Hartlepool's figures were the highest across the sub region.

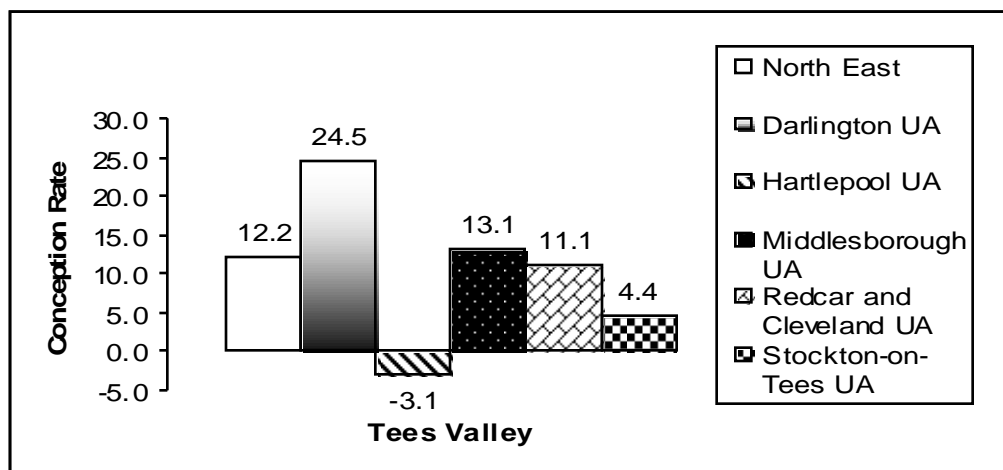
(i) Office of National Statistics – Provisional 2005 Conception Rates

(ii) Rate per 1000 females aged 15-17

**Table 1 - Under-18 Conception Rates in the Tees Valley (2005)**

Source: Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2007  
Rate per 1000 females aged 15-17

- 7.6 Members also received information in relation to the levels of improvement in under-18 conception rates across the Tees Valley (as outlined in **Table 2** below) and noted with disappointment that Hartlepool was the only Tees Valley Authority to have an increase in its rate (3%).

**Table 2 – Percentage Improvement in Under-18 Conception Rates in the Tees Valley (2005)**

Source: Office for National Statistics and Teenage Pregnancy Unit, 2007  
Rate per 1000 females aged 15-17

## 8. THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POSITION IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE)

- 8.1 The Forum learned that the provision of sex education had for many years been a key factor in addressing sexual health issues. It was noted with interest that sex education provision had over the last 50 years changed

drastically, with provision in the 1950's and 1960's sex education largely focussed upon the teaching about reproduction. It was not until the 1980's that emphasis started to be placed upon the acquisition of skills for decision making, communication, personal relationships and parenting strategies as part of sex education. This path led to the development of today's SRE, the aim of which was to provide learning about sex, sexuality, and sexual health, with emphasis upon emotions and relationships.

### **National Policy for the Provision of SRE for Young People**

- 8.2 During the course of the investigation, it became apparent to the Forum that the provision of sexual health education was engrained through many strands of national policy and strategies, including Every Child Matters, the Children and Young Person's Plan and Extended Schools.
- 8.3 The Forum received clarification that every local education authority, head teacher and governing body had a statutory responsibility to take account of guidance requiring the provision of SRE. Members acknowledged that whilst every school was required to have an SRE policy in place there was no statutory requirement for the provision of SRE as a specific element of the curriculum. In reality, much of the biological content of SRE was provided through the statutory National Science Curriculum with the provision of the remainder of SRE engrained in Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHE).
- 8.4 Members were interested to find on a national basis that indications were that children and young people's wished for better SRE. It was also interesting for the Forum to learn through its investigation that many of the views expressed nationally were shared by Hartlepool pupils with in many ways the SRE provided being too little, too late and too biological, with insufficient emphasis on practical relationship advice.
- 8.5 The Forum noted with interest OFSTED observations regarding the difference in the quality of teaching in SRE by specialists and non-specialist tutors. With indications that the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in twice as many lessons taught by tutors as by specialist teachers. Members supported the view that the most effective teaching was by teachers with a special interest and expertise in SRE. Emphasis was, however, placed upon the need for a package of measures; including a professional lead (i.e. a school nurse), peer mentoring and the availability of outside expertise should it be required.
- 8.6 In relation to how SRE is provided, the Forum also received evidence of the mounting pressure being placed upon Government for the inclusion of SRE as a statutory element of the curriculum. Bodies involved in this included the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and the Forum was disappointed that the results of its work would not be available in time for consideration during the course of this investigation.

## 9. THE PROVISION OF SEX AND RELATIONSHIP EDUCATION (SRE) IN HARTLEPOOL SCHOOLS

- 9.1 Following consideration of the national and regional position in relation to the provision of SRE, the Forum went on to look in detail at the position in Hartlepool.

### The Sexual Health Issues Effecting Young People in Hartlepool

- 9.2 The Forum noted with concern that the percentage of Year 11 students who were sexually active in Hartlepool had increased over the last five years, as shown in **Table 3** below. Members also found of interest information provided on the sexual health issues affecting these young people (teenage pregnancies, terminations and STI's).

**Table 3: Percentage of Year 11 Students Sexually Active.**

	2002 (%)	2003 (%)	2004 (%)	2005 (%)	2006 (%)
<b>Boys</b>	35	41	34	38	39
<b>Girls</b>	46	56	55	51	49

Source: Additional Information Report – Children's Services Scrutiny Forum 19 March 2007

- 9.3 Teenage Pregnancies/Conceptions – Evidence provided showed that the number for under-18 conceptions in Hartlepool had increased from 126 in 2004 to 149 in 2006, making it the highest in the North East region. Further information on the under-18 conception rate in Hartlepool was provided earlier in Section 7.5 of this report.<sup>(iii)</sup>
- 9.4 The Forum expressed its disappointment with this situation and emphasised the importance of accelerating the full implementation of the Council's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy to assist in reversing this trend.
- 9.5 Termination of Pregnancies – The Forum considered evidence in relation to the percentage of conceptions that lead to terminations in Hartlepool and was troubled to see that the figures had increased between 1998 and 2005 for both under-18 and under-16 conceptions. In the case of under-16 conceptions, this equated to 52.9% leading to abortion in 1998, compared with 57.2% in 2005. For under-18's, the figure was 42.4% in 1998, compared to 46.9% in 2005.<sup>(iii)</sup>
- 9.6 Particular attention was drawn to the issue of repeat terminations as a problem in Hartlepool. Whilst the Forum was reassured that this represented only a very small number of individuals, concern was expressed that even one was too many. Members were, however, pleased to find that work was ongoing to address the issue.

(iii) Office of National Statistics – Provisional 2005 Conception Rates

- 9.7 Sexually Transmitted Infections – Members considered, with concern, evidence in relation to Hartlepool's high rate of STI's. It was evident that in 2005 three males and 14 females had contracted conditions including Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, bacterial vaginosis and the w art virus.
- 9.8 The Forum welcomed indications that detailed work was being undertaken to deal with the issue in Hartlepool, including the provision of highly visible advertisements for special clinics in non-clinical settings, i.e. Connexions and the Youth Service. Members were, however, frustrated that despite all of the work being undertaken projections were that figures for 2006 would increase even further.

### **Strategies/Practices Implemented for the Provision of SRE in Hartlepool.**

- 9.9 Members were encouraged to find that SRE provision in Hartlepool schools played an important part of the Council's strategic agenda and received evidence of its inclusion within the following plans and strategies:-
- (i) Every Child Matters;
  - (ii) The Children and Young Person's Plan;
  - (iii) Local Area Agreements;
  - (iv) The Teenage Pregnancy Strategy;
  - (v) The Healthy Schools Headline Plan; and
  - (vi) School Improvement Operational Plan.
- 9.10 The Forum was pleased to find that the approach to SRE in Hartlepool had been geared to reflect the differing needs of children and young people in primary and secondary schools across the town.
- 9.11 SRE in Hartlepool Primary Schools – Members noted with interests that the identification of a gap in SRE provision resulted in the 'in house' development of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme. The intention of the programme being to provide SRE from Reception, supporting existing work and providing a gentle approach to aspects of Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHE) that had been taught for many years.
- 9.12 The Forum was advised of the various stages of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme and was pleased to learn of its successful implementation in all 29 out of Hartlepool's 30 primary schools, with discussions ongoing with the one remaining school. Members were also pleased to find that 'Lucinda and Godfrey' materials were being further developed for use in special schools.





- 9.13 Although Members were disappointed to find that 'take up' of the programme was not 100%, it was recognised that the issue of SRE in primary schools was a very contentious one, especially in some church schools. It was, however, evident to the Forum that the aim of SRE in primary schools was not to promote sexual relationships, but rather to develop children's confidence in dealing with the whole range of relationships they will develop and the issues that arise from them. In view of this the Forum expressed its support for the encouragement of all schools to take advantage of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme.
- 9.14 SRE Provision in Hartlepool Secondary School – Members learned that in 1998 the 'APAUSE' programme (Added Power and Understanding in Sex Education) was introduced in Hartlepool to provide extended SRE provision. As occurred nationally, SRE provision in Hartlepool was provided in conjunction with statutory PSHE lessons and consisted of:-
- (i) Curriculum materials for Years 7 and 8 (National Curriculum Science);
  - (ii) Three adult led sessions in Years 9 and 10 (led jointly by a class teacher and a health professional, often as school nurse); and
  - (iii) Four peer led sessions in year 9.
- 9.15 Whilst curriculum material was provided in Years 7 and 8, the Forum expressed concern regarding the gap in specific SRE provision in these years. These concerns were supported by the views of young people during the investigation, in that the start of the 'APAUSE' programme in Year 9 was too late for some pupils. The Forum was keen to see this gap filled and was happy to learn that a pilot project was in the process of being developed to strengthen the delivery of SRE in secondary schools. The new programme was to begin in Year 7 and end in Year 11 and was based on evidence from OFSTED which demonstrated that comprehensive and early SRE empowered and encouraged young people to have sex later and use contraception when they do so.
- 9.16 The Forum expressed disappointment that only five out of the Local Authority's seven secondary schools would be delivering the 'APAUSE' programme in 2007 and felt that work to encourage participation by the remaining schools should be maintained. It was, however, recognised that the provision of SRE could be a contentious issue for some schools.
- 9.17 The Forum noted that SRE outside PSHE classes was at the discretion of the school and its governing body. Whilst the Forum acknowledged that changing this situation was not within its remit, a view was expressed that ways of obtaining governing body 'buy in' for the provision of SRE, and any recommendations made by this Forum, needed to be explored. As a means of doing this, Members suggested that it would be beneficial for the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to meet with school governors to obtain 'buy in' for the recommendations arising from this investigation.

- 9.18 The Forum was also made aware that SRE in secondary schools was currently funded by individual schools and the Primary Care Trust. In view of this, the Forum felt that it was important that schools continued to see the value of SRE and that an investment in staff was required to enable them to deliver high quality teaching and learning in SRE. This was particularly evident to the Forum given indications that schools were finding it hard to get teachers to provide SRE and the importance of 'good' teaching for the success of SRE. Emphasis was also placed upon the role for external agencies to support schools in the delivery of SRE, with it most effective where it was planned to add value to the existing programme.

## **10. EVIDENCE FROM THE AUTHORITY'S CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 10.1 The Forum was keen to seek the views of the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and at its meeting on the 8 January 2007 received confirmation of the Portfolio Holder's acknowledgement for the importance of SRE in Hartlepool. Members welcomed the Portfolio Holder's eagerness to receive the outcome of their investigation and took on board her views regarding the importance of undertaking a subjective/qualitative assessment of young people's views, in addition to the examination of statistical information. The Forum's activities to obtain this subjective/qualitative information are outlined in Sections 11.7 and 13 of this report.

## **11. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SRE PROVISION IN HARTLEPOOL AND POSSIBLE WAYS OF IMPROVING IT.**

- 11.1 The Forum considered evidence on the effectiveness of SRE provision from a variety of sources, including detailed officer reports, the results of the annual Year 11 'APAUSE' questionnaire and an informal survey undertaken by the young people co-opted to the Forum. The views of young people, and teachers with responsibility for the provision of SRE, were also obtained through a Focus Group session, details of which are outlined in Section 11 of the report.

### **The Effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool's Primary Schools**

- 11.2 The Forum was pleased to learn that the success of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme in Hartlepool had resulted in it being purchased, and 'rolled out' by other Local Authorities. Members acknowledged the importance of the continued development of the programme with the income generated. As a way of doing this attention was drawn to the possible benefits of extending the availability of the Lucinda and Godfrey' books direct to parents.
- 11.3 The Forum was aware of the controversial nature of the provision of SRE in primary schools and Members themselves initially expressed mixed views regarding the age at which SRE should start to be provided. It was,

however, apparent to the Forum that the success of the 'Lucinda and Godfrey' programme could not be doubted and officers were commended on the development of the programme.

### The Effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool's Secondary Schools

- 11.4 Results of the Year 11 'APAUSE' Questionnaire - The effectiveness of the 'APAUSE' programme was measured by a questionnaire undertaken by all Year 11 Pupils. Members were pleased to find from the results of last year's 'APAUSE' questionnaire that there had been a steady increase in the number of students with correct knowledge about STI's and contraception. **Table 4** illustrates this and highlights that girls have a better understanding than boys.

**Table 4 – Percentage Improvement in Under-18 Conception Rates in the Tees Valley (2005)**

	Boys				Girls			
	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %
<b>STI Questions</b>	58	66	62	67	67	73	76	78
<b>Contraception Questions</b>	62	59	65	66	71	72	76	77

Source: Additional Information Report (APAUSE Questionnaire results 2006) – Children's Services Scrutiny Forum 19 March 2007

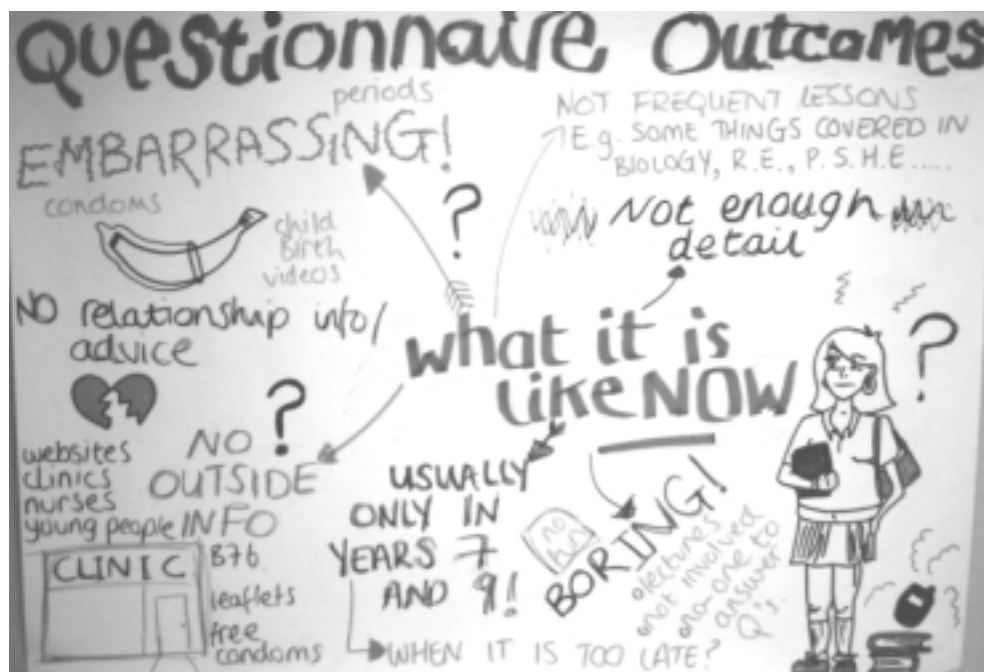
- 11.5 There was, however, some concern regarding the negative trend in terms of satisfaction with the overall provision of sex education. Whilst **Table 5** illustrates this it also showed that the highest proportion of students were of the view that they had learnt a lot and SRE provision should be left as it is.

**Table 5 – How Year 11 Pupils Participating in the 'APAUSE' Programme Feel About Their Sex Education?**

	Boys				Girls			
	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %	2003 %	2004 %	2005 %	2006 %
<b>It is ok as it is</b>	72	64	73	72	48	59	61	68
<b>Boring</b>	40		37	39	33		37	39
<b>Learnt a lot</b>	83	82	71	78	82	83	72	77
<b>Enjoyed it</b>	66	68	64	60	62	69	57	58

- 11.6 Whilst a reduction in figures was good the Forum drew attention to the importance of raising the aspirations of young women at risk of teenage pregnancies as a way of reducing conception rates. This was particularly relevant given the disappointing results of the Year 11 questionnaire, which indicated that only 30% of boys and 40% of girls in Hartlepool were planning to take a degree, compared with 45% and 58% respectively in 2003. This was low in comparison to other Authorities nationally.
- 11.7 The Forum noted that a similar route for the identification of parent's views did not exist. In view of this, the Forum indicated that the establishment of a similar questionnaire for parents could be beneficial as indications were that some parents find it difficult to communicate with their children about sex and relationships.
- 11.8 Questionnaire undertaken by the young people's representatives co-opted onto the Forum – As part of the Forum innovative approach to this investigation, the young people co-opted to the Forum agreed to undertake an informal survey of their peers (older than Year 11) to ascertain their views on SRE provision and possible improvements.
- 11.9 Following completion of the questionnaire a 'mind mapping' exercise was undertaken by the young people and the outcomes of this are outlined below and overleaf.

### What young people think of SRE provision in Hartlepool.



### How young people would like to see SRE provided in Hartlepool.



11.10 The Forum received a summary of the findings of the questionnaire at its meeting on the 19 March 2007. The Forum found of particular interest issues raised regarding:-

- (i) The link between the sex education and drug/alcohol education and the need to combine provision in the future;
- (ii) The preference of students for young people to provide SRE education;
- (iii) The feeling that current SRE provision was too little, too, with insufficient relationship information;
- (iv) Lacked the provision of information regarding outside sources of advice and assistance; and
- (v) The perception that SRE was boring with lessons too much like lectures (no real practical involvement).

11.11 Members were impressed with the information obtained by the young people co-opted on to the Forum and were pleased to find that some mirrored the views of SRE professionals. In particular justification for the development of combined sex/drugs/alcohol education which Members were encouraged to learn was already being explored.

11.12 The Forum also took on board the preference for young people to provide SRE and suggested that the establishment of a working relationship with Millennium Volunteers and Further Education Colleges in Hartlepool (in

particular Hartlepool College of FE) for the provision of peer mentors should be explored. It was, however, recognised that there had been problems in the past with students fitting participation in with their course work. In light of this, it was suggested that the possible course of action would be to explore the feasibility of acting as a peer mentor contributing to their qualifications.

- 11.13 The Forum found of interest a contradiction in young people and teacher views in relation to the provision of the relationship element of SRE provision. Whilst young people during the questionnaire process and Focus Group session (Section 13 of the report refers) felt that adequate 'practical' relationship education was not provided it was clear that teacher believed that it was. It was evident to the Forum that there was a difference of opinion as to what young people wanted, and needed, and as such further work needed to be undertaken to develop the relationship element of SRE provision.
- 11.14 The Forum acknowledged that considerable work had been undertaken to improve SRE in schools, non school settings and for parents' access to Contraception and Sexual Health Services. It was also the Forum's view that disappointing figures for under-18 conception rates did not truly reflect the level and quality of work being undertaken to ensure the provision of effective SRE.

#### **How outside bodies/agencies assist in the provision of SRE in Hartlepool.**

- 11.15 The Forum noted with interest that Hartlepool Borough Council worked with a number of external agencies to provide support in the provision of SRE. To gain a flavour of the work undertaken the Forum received evidence from Teesside Positive Action, PATCH (Parent and Toddler Care in Hartlepool) in relation to their 'Speakeasy' Project and RELATE in relation to their 'Time to Talk' programme.
- 11.16 Members also found of interest details of the 'Speak Easy' and 'Time to Talk' projects and received positive parent feedback on the work of the 'Speak Easy' project. It was brought to the Forum's attention that other Local Authorities (i.e. Sunderland) had benefited from a combination of external programmes, including the 'Time to Talk' and 'Speakeasy' programmes, with the 'APAUSE' system. Whilst the feasibility, and benefits of developing SRE in Hartlepool in this way needed to be explored further the Forum expressed support for the development of links between the Local Authority and these projects.
- 11.17 During the course of presentation the Forum's attention was again drawn to the gap in provision at Years 7 and 8 and the poor attendance of parents at information sessions prior to their children starting the 'APAUSE' programme. Members were keen to reiterate their support for the bridging of the gap in provision in Years 7 and 8 and expressed concern that by the time the 'APAUSE' programme started it was often too late for some young people in terms of providing information. Members also welcomed the comments made in relation to the need to identify ways of encouraging

parental involvement and indicated that this would need to be explored further in Hartlepool.

- 11.18 It was also suggested that in order to reduce teenage pregnancy rates it would be beneficial to review /update the language used for the delivery of the 'APAUSE' programme and the Forum was interested to hear views in support of the compulsory inclusion of SRE as a part of the curriculum.

## **12. SRE PROVISION IN A NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITY**

- 12.1 It had originally been intended that a small sub-group of the Forum would visit a neighbouring Local Authority to establish what good practice exists and how Hartlepool could benefit from the adoption of any such practices. During the course of the investigation it became apparent to Members that it would be more effective for a presentation to be given to the whole Forum.
- 12.2 The Forum subsequently welcomed evidence from South Tyneside Council's SRE Co-ordinator and was interested to learn that South Tyneside's under-18 conception figures in 2005 were broadly in line with those in Hartlepool (149 in Hartlepool and 147). However, it became apparent to the Forum that this was where the similarity between the two authorities ceased in terms of rates of improvement in 2005. The Forum noted with interest that the percentage improvement rate for South Tyneside in 2005 was 25.7% whilst as previously indicated there had been a 3% increase over the same period in Hartlepool.
- 12.3 In examining the ways in which South Tyneside Council achieved its 2005 decrease in under-18 conception rates, the Forum noted that the authority's work in relation to sex, drugs and alcohol education was now combined to reflect the views of young people's views that the two subjects were connected. Work had also been undertaken to provide more regular SRE/Drugs Awareness training following feedback from young people that nine hours over 3 weeks was insufficient to meet their needs. It had also been highlighted that previous SRE provision was not flexible enough to cater for children who were ready for SRE at different times.
- 12.4 The Forum was interested to find that South Tyneside Council also worked closely with the Youth Service, the Stag Project and the PEP Project (Policy, Education and Prevention) and that emphasis was placed upon the inclusion of SRE as a qualification for KS4 pupils. Of particular interest to the Forum was the use of 'Practice Sessions', as part of which young people were asked to interview an adult. The benefits of this in opening up dialogue between young people and parents were apparent to the Forum.
- 12.5 South Tyneside had also in the past relied heavily upon external providers to support SRE; however, budgetary restraints had meant that this could not be sustained. Members were interested to find South Tyneside now viewed the way forward as being through the provision of effective staff training to enable teachers to comfortably teach the sessions, with support from

specialist such as school nurses and where applicable additional input from outside providers. The Forum was pleased to find that this mirrored the views expressed by SRE professionals in Hartlepool and encouraged to find that a pilot scheme for a combined SRE, drug and alcohol awareness course was already underway in Hartlepool. The intention of this scheme was also to start to bridge the gap in SRE provision in Years 7 and 8.

**13. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – THE VIEWS OF LOCAL RESIDENTS, PARENTS, CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AND THOSE WORKING IN SCHOOLS ON THE PROVISION OF SER IN HARTLEPOOL**

- 13.1 In addition to the consultation exercise undertaken with young people through the informal questionnaire (as outlined in Section 9.19 of the report) the Forum was keen to engage further with pupils and teachers with responsibility for the provision of SRE. In order for this to occur a Focus Group Session was held on the 15 March 2007, to which invitations were extended to all of the Council's secondary schools to send a selection of Year 10 pupils and a teacher.



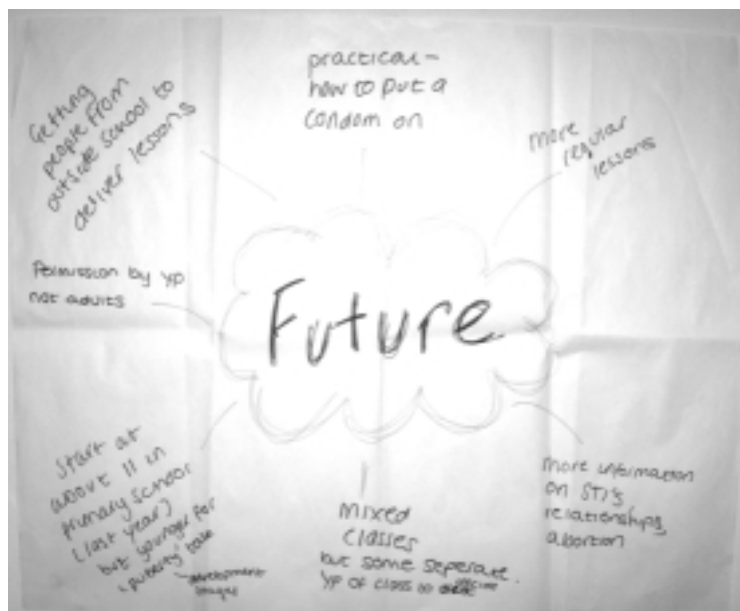
**Focus Group Session was held on the 15 March 2007**

- 13.2 Invitations to the session were accepted by Brierton Secondary School, English Martyrs Secondary School and Manor College of Technology. During the course of the session representatives were given the opportunity to express their views on the effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool and how they would like to see it improve in the future. To facilitate this teachers and pupils were split into separate groups to ensure that everyone felt free to speak and a 'mind mapping' exercise was undertaken with students, as illustrated overleaf.





**What Year 10 pupils think of SRE provision in Hartlepool.**



## How Year 10 pupils would like to see SRE provided in Hartlepool.

13.3 A summary of the views expressed at this event were as outlined below :-

### Year 10 Student's Views

## SRE Provision Now

- (i) There is not enough relationship advice;
- (ii) SRE should include drugs and alcohol information and advice;
- (iii) Lessons aren't often enough, or long enough;
- (iv) Need more practical demonstrations;
- (v) A lot of what it taught pupils already know, or feel they know, from the TV and radio; and
- (vi) SRE is quite good but could be better.

SRE Provision in the Future

- (i) That lessons should be provided by young people and not adults;
- (ii) There should be more practical demonstrations i.e. How to put on a condom;
- (iii) Lessons need to be more regular;
- (iv) There needs to be more information on STI's, relationships and abortion; and
- (v) It would be beneficial for some classes to be single sex (The students in the class should decide).

**Teachers Views**SRE Provision Now

- (i) Felt that there was no gap in provision in years 7 and 8, with information provided through PSHE lessons;
- (ii) It was useful for children to know who to speak to, hence better for a teacher to provide SRE, with specialist assistance;
- (iii) It is not easy for young people to talk to their parents. Need to find ways of opening dialogue;
- (iv) Parental take up of information sessions prior to their children beginning 'APAUSE' is poor and it would be better if parents were more involved in the 'APAUSE' programme; and
- (v) Schools are not fully aware of the external services available to assist them in the provision of SRE.

SRE Provision in the Future

- (i) There would be benefits in promoting parental awareness of the 'APAUSE' programme at parent's evenings, options evenings and similar events (i.e. a stand).
- (ii) An information/best practice sharing system needs to be developed between schools. This could perhaps be done through a regular seminar or shared personal development days;
- (iii) Schools would benefit from a central resource/query line, possibly through Health Development;
- (iv) Teachers would like to be able to give the same support to students in Years 7 and 8 as is provided later through the 'APAUSE' programme (need smaller classes and similar support as with the 'APAUSE' programme; and
- (v) It would be useful to obtain feedback from students immediately following each session to assess its effectiveness, especially when an external provider is used.

- 13.3 The Forum noted with interest concerns regarding parental involvement and awareness in the education of their children in relation to sex and relationships. Members were concerned at the poor attendance of parents at pre 'APAUSE' information sessions and agreed that alternative ways of

relaying information needed to be explored. Members welcomed proposals that the use of a stall or presentation at parents evenings or option selection sessions could be a way forward and suggested that the feasibility of this be explored.

- 13.4 Based on the evidence provided it was also evident to the Forum that there appeared to be room for improvement in terms of information sharing between schools. In view of this, Members supported the development of information/best practice sharing systems between schools, as suggested by teachers through a regular seminar or shared personal development days. Support was also given for the development of a central resource/query line for schools, possibly through Health Development, to ensure that teachers are fully aware of the internal and external assistance available for the provision of SRE.

## 14. CONCLUSIONS

### 14.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum concluded:-

- (a) That increasing teenage pregnancy rates in Hartlepool did not truly reflect the level, and quality, of work being undertaken to improve SRE in schools, non school settings and for parent's access to Contraception and Sexual Health Services;
- (b) That emphasis needed to be placed upon the link between sexual health and drugs/alcohol education with the need for their combination in the future;
- (c) That the most effective way of providing SRE was for lessons to be provided by trained teachers with a special interest and expertise in SRE, with support from a professional lead (i.e. School Nurses) and the use of an element of peer mentoring. Specialist external providers should also be utilised where appropriate;
- (d) That a working relationship with Millennium Volunteers and Colleges of Further Education in Hartlepool (in particular Hartlepool College of FE) for the provision of SRE peer mentors could be beneficial for all parties. The feasibility of this needed to be explored further, including, as an incentive, the possibility of participation as a peer mentor contributing to further education students qualifications;
- (e) That the effectiveness of SRE in Hartlepool was dependent upon the provision of quality teaching, and as such emphasis needed to be placed on provision of effective training and support to encourage teachers to become specialist SRE providers;
- (f) That with the 'APAUSE' programme beginning in Year 9, a gap in SRE provision existed during Years 7 and 8. This gap needed to be bridged to ensure that the commencement of SRE in secondary schools was not too

late for some pupils, and in order for this to occur the pilot programme currently being implemented needed to be supported;

- (g) That parental involvement was crucial to the provision of effective SRE provision and ways of encouraging this needed to be explored. This could include the use of external learning sources such as the 'Speakeasy' programme and development of ways to raise parental awareness of the 'APAUSE' programme and external sources of advice and support, i.e. a stall or presentation at parents evenings and/or option selection sessions;
- (h) That although the provision of SRE was not a compulsory element of the National Curriculum, its importance for the children and young people of Hartlepool had to be recognised. In view of this, Head Teachers and Governors in all Hartlepool Schools needed to be encouraged to provide SRE, including the Lucinda and Godfrey programme, in addition to existing PSHE lessons. As an incentive to do this, ways of supporting schools in terms of resources and time needed to be explored;
- (i) That the sexual and emotional development of children and young people with special educational needs must be recognised and emphasis placed upon the development, and implementation, of SRE material suitable for all needs. This included the modification of the programme for the delivery of the Lucinda and Godfrey books;
- (j) That work by other Local Authorities had identified a clear benefit in the combination of external programmes, including the 'Time to Talk' and 'Speakeasy' programmes, with the 'APAUSE' system. The feasibility and benefits of developing SRE in Hartlepool in this way needed to be explored further.
- (k) That whilst relationship issues were included in the current SRE programme, it was apparent that young people did not feel that their needs in terms of the provision of relationship education were being met. In light of this further work needed to be undertaken to develop the relationship element of SRE provision, with a change of emphasis from sex to relationships, including the possible renaming of the programme to Relationship and Sex Education;
- (l) That officer's work on the development of the Lucinda and Godfrey books was commended and support needed to be given to the further development of the learning resource;
- (m) That whilst the effectiveness of the 'APAUSE' programme was monitored through the Year 11 student questionnaire additional ways of ascertaining the effectiveness of SRE provision needed to be explored, including the possible development of a questionnaire for parents and use of feedback forms to assess the effectiveness of individual lessons;

- (n) That in terms of the further development of SRE in Hartlepool consideration needed to be given to:-
  - (i) The importance of raising pupil aspirations;
  - (i) The use of less formal language in the delivery of the 'APAUSE' programme, as suggested by young people and external providers;
  - (ii) The development of information/best practice sharing systems between schools, as suggested by teachers through a regular seminar or shared personal development days; and
  - (iv) The development of a central resource/query line for schools, possibly through Health Development, to ensure that teachers are aware of the internal and external assistance available for the provision of SRE.
- (o) That as a means of achieving buy in for the provision of SRE outside PSHE lessons it could be beneficial for the Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to meet with school governors to present the findings of this investigation.

## 15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 15.1 The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum has taken evidence from a wide range of sources to assist in the formulation of a balanced range of recommendations. The Forum's key recommendations to the Cabinet are as outlined below :-
- (a) That all primary, secondary and specialist schools in Hartlepool be encouraged to provide SRE and a uniform approach to its provision promoted, based upon the use of trained teachers, with:-
    - (i) support from a professional lead (i.e. School Nurses);
    - (ii) an element of peer mentoring, where appropriate; and
    - (iii) the use of specialist external providers where appropriate.
  - (b) That the establishment of a working relationship with Millennium Volunteers and further education establishments in Hartlepool for the provision of SRE peer mentors be explored;
  - (c) That parental involvement/awareness plays a crucial role in the effective provision of SRE and more emphasis should therefore be placed upon the use of external learning sources such as the 'Speakeasy' programme and stalls/presentations at school events;
  - (d) That in recognition of the sexual and emotional development of children and young people with special educational needs, work continues to be undertaken to develop, and modify, SRE materials;

- (e) That in order to further develop SRE provision in Hartlepool the Local Authority explore:-
  - (i) Ways of improving the delivery of the 'relationship' element of SRE to better meet young people's needs;
  - (ii) The use of less formal language in the delivery of the 'APAUSE' programme;
  - (iii) Ways of improving training and support for SRE teachers, to encourage their participation;
  - (iv) Ways of ensuring the continuation of SRE provision between Years 7 and 8;
  - (v) Ways of increasing the current frequency of SRE provision within the curriculum; and
  - (vi) The development of improved information/best practice sharing systems/processes for schools, including the provision of a central resource/query line.
- (f) That additional ways of assessing the effectiveness of SRE provision, including the introduction of a parental questionnaire and feedback forms for students following individual lessons, be explored;
- (g) That the combining of external programmes, including the 'Time to Talk' and 'Speakeasy' programmes, with the 'APAUSE' system be explored;
- (h) That consideration be given to the renaming of 'Sex and Relationship Education' (SRE) to that of 'Relationship and Sex Education' to place primary emphasis upon the relationship aspect of provision within Hartlepool schools, and
- (i) That the current Chair of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum meets with school governors to present the findings of this investigation and encourage 'buy in' for the provision of SRE.

## 16. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 16.1 The Committee is grateful to all those who have presented evidence during the course of our investigation. We would like to place on record our appreciation, in particular of the willingness and co-operation we have received from the below named:-

Hartlepool Borough Council:

Sandra Saint, PSHE and Healthy Schools Co-ordinator

Deborah Gibbin, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator

John Robinson, Children's Fund Manager

Cynthia Alder, School Nurse

Chris Rounsley, School Nurses

A Hamilton, English Martyrs Secondary School,

Claire Nossiter, English Martyrs Secondary School

Marcia McHale, English Martyrs Secondary School

W Smith, Brierton Secondary School,

Grace Mitchell, Brierton Secondary School

Jill Hall, Manor College of Technology

Reuben Bianco, Manor College of Technology

Dwayne Douglas, Manor College of Technology

Chelsea Carrington, Manor College of Technology

R Goodhand, Manor College of Technology

External Representatives:

Doug Hallam, Regional Co-ordinator North East/UK Youth Parliament

Michael Kay, Service Manager, Teesside Positive Action

Jan Dobson, Training & Development Officer, PATCH

Debby Ianson, Parent participating in the 'Speakeasy' programme (PATCH)

Rita Nelson, Director, Relate North East

David Messenger, SRE Co-ordinator, South Tyneside Council

**COUNCILLOR JANE SHAW  
CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**

**April 2007**

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were consulted or referred to in the preparation of this report:-

- (vi) Office of National Statistics – Provisional 2005 Conception Rates.
- (vii) Extended Schools: Improving Access to Sexual Health Advice Services (DfES).
- (viii) National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Prevention of sexually transmitted infections and under 18 conceptions) February 2007.
- (ix) Report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Investigation into the Provision of Sexual Health Education for Young People in Hartlepool Schools – Scoping Report' presented to the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum on 8 January 2007.
- (i) Department of Health – Hartlepool 2006 Health Profile.
- (ii) Article by Michael Reiss (Professor of Science education at the Institute of Education, University of London).
- (iii) The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2004/05
- (iv) Sex and relationship education (HMI 433), Ofsted, 2002
- (v) APAUSE Year 11 Reports, Peninsular Medical School, Universities of Exeter & Plymouth, 2006.
- (vi) Sex Education Forum – SRE Framework – Fact Sheet 30



## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM REPORT

16 April 2007



**Report of:** Director of Children's Services

**Subject:** JOINT AREA REVIEW OF SERVICES FOR  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Children's Services Scrutiny Forum with the results of the Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People.

### 2. BACKGROUND

The results of the Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People were published on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2007. The results have been communicated to Elected Members and at the meeting of Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> March a verbal update was given.

### 3. OUTCOMES

**Appendix 1** contains the outcome of the Joint Area Review of Children's Services. **Appendix 2** is the summary report prepared for children and young people. **Appendix 3** is the report on the inspection of the Youth Service carried out at the time of the JAR.

### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Children's Services Scrutiny Forum to:

- Note the results of the Joint Area Review
- Agree to receive further reports detailing improvement plans resulting from the inspection

### 6. CONTACT OFFICER

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# Joint area review

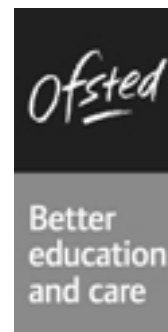
Hartlepool

Children's Services Authority Area

## Review of services for children and young people

Adult Learning Inspectorate  
Audit Commission  
Commission for Social Care Inspection  
Healthcare Commission  
HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate  
HM Inspectorate of Constabulary  
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration  
HM Inspectorate of Prisons  
HM Inspectorate of Probation  
Ofsted

Audience	Published	Reference no.
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## Introduction

1. This joint area review was conducted using the arrangements required under Section 20 of the Children Act 2004. It was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of seven inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Healthcare Commission (HCC), the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) and the Audit Commission. The review was undertaken according to the requirements of the *Framework for the inspection of children's services*.

2. The review was linked to the contemporaneous corporate assessment of the local council by the Audit Commission and its findings are represented in the relevant part of the corporate assessment report.

3. This review describes the outcomes achieved by children and young people growing up in the Hartlepool area and evaluates the way local services, taken together, contribute to their well-being. Joint area reviews focus on the extent to which children and young people are healthy, safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and are well prepared to secure economic well-being.

4. The review evaluates the collective contribution made to each outcome for children and young people by relevant services in the area. It also judges the contributions made by the council's services overall and, specifically, its education and children's social care services. Particular attention is given to joint action by local services on behalf of those groups of children and young people who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. Two such groups are covered in detail: children and young people who are looked after by the council; and children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

5. The review took place in two stages consisting in total of three weeks over a six-week period. The first stage reviewed all existing evidence including:

- a self-assessment undertaken by local public service providers
- a survey of children and young people
- performance data
- the findings of the contemporaneous inspection of the youth service
- planning documents
- information from the inspection of local settings, such as schools and day care provision
- evidence gathered during the earlier Youth Offending Team inspection
- briefings from staff within inspectorates, commissions and other public bodies in contact with local providers.

6. The second stage involved inspection fieldwork. This included studies of how far local services have improved outcomes for a small sample of children and young people, some of whom have the most complex needs, and a study

of provision in one neighbourhood in Hartlepool. It also included gathering evidence primarily on six key judgements, selected because of their critical importance to improving outcomes for children and young people in the local area. This included discussions with elected members of the local authority and their equivalents in other public agencies, officers from these agencies, service users and community representatives. A review of case files for children and young people receiving support from a number of local agencies was also included.

## Context

7. Hartlepool is a compact coastal authority and its population of nearly 90,000 is projected to decline slightly over the next decade. It is located at the eastern end of the Tees valley and, despite a port facility and being close to a major north-south trunk road route, Hartlepool remains relatively isolated from the national transport infrastructure and major markets. From a strong economic position in 1900, with a thriving port and associated industries, Hartlepool town and area had been in decline. However, there is now strong evidence of a growing renaissance supported by both public-sector and private-sector investment. Reinvestment in the docks area, for example, including The Maritime Experience and the marina, is generating tourism that will be further enhanced by Hartlepool's hosting of the Tall Ships event in 2010. Regeneration is also strongly evident in the town itself, particularly with ongoing large scale housing redevelopment.

8. The town of Hartlepool is densely populated, with the rest of the borough being predominantly rural. Nearly 2% of the population is of black or minority ethnic heritage, although this small percentage is growing. The 0-19 age group represents 27% of the population, which is higher than the national average, although this is projected to fall to around 15% of the overall total over the next 13 years. The area is socio-economically disadvantaged, with 40% of Hartlepool residents living within the category of the 10% most deprived areas in the country. Life expectancy is lower than national and regional averages, with wide variations between council wards. Unemployment rates are significantly higher than the national average, contributing to an underlying culture of disadvantage. Hartlepool Council became a unitary authority in 1996. Overall political control is held numerically by Labour, although there is an independent elected Mayor and an inclusive coalition cabinet.

9. There is a range of nursery settings in Hartlepool, together with 30 primary schools, six secondary schools, two special schools and three further education colleges, making this one of the smallest Local Education Authorities nationally. Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council (LSC) are partners with the local authority, post-16 colleges, training providers and schools in addressing the 14-19 strategy. Post 16 education and training is provided by one further education college, one sixth form college, one 11-18 Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided secondary school and 17 work-based training providers. Entry to Employment provision is managed by three providers within a local consortium

controlling 126 places. Adult and community learning, including family learning, is provided by the local authority and Hartlepool College of further education. Cleveland College of Art and design also provides education and training in Hartlepool.

10. Primary care for children in Hartlepool is provided by the Hartlepool Primary Care Trust. North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust is the main provider of acute health services. Other children's hospital services are provided by South Tees NHS Trust, which also provides services to surrounding areas. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are provided by the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust, which also provides services to surrounding areas. The trusts providing health services for the children of Hartlepool, with the exception of the Ambulance Service, fall within the North East Strategic Health Authority.

11. There are no young offender institutions (YOI) in the immediate area. Close liaison exists, however, with Castington YOI in Northumberland, since this institution caters for any remand requirements from Hartlepool. High levels of social deprivation contribute to higher than average levels of crime.

12. Services for children and young people are delivered by Hartlepool children's services, which incorporate early years, children's social care services, education, Children's Fund and the youth service. The council has corporate parenting responsibility for 125 looked after children and young people.

## Summary Report

### Outcomes for children and young people

13. **Outcomes for children and young people in Hartlepool are good.** The findings of this review corroborate most judgements reached by the authority and its partners in their self-assessment. There is, indeed, strong partnership working across all outcome areas, with good examples of flexible arrangements to meet specific individual needs. Health education and provision is generally good, although there is a weakness in the dedicated provision of CAMHS to those children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The most vulnerable children and young people are well safeguarded through effective action by all agencies. Good and improving early years and childcare provision is available to all who require it. Standards of educational attainment have continued to improve and are now generally good, which is commendable, particularly given the socio-economic factors involved. The reintegration of excluded school pupils, however, remains a concern. Particularly good support is offered to vulnerable pupils, who consequently achieve well, although there are poorer levels of progression and participation in extended education for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consultation with children and young people is well developed, although the full participation of Black and minority ethnic groups in this respect is underdeveloped. Multi-agency work to reduce offending and anti-social

behaviour is generally good. Young people are increasingly prepared well for working life, although the numbers who are not in education, employment or training remains high. Hartlepool Borough Council and its partners are justifiably proud of what has been achieved to date, but are continuing with a clear and ambitious vision to further improve services for children and young people.

## **The impact of local services**

### **14. The impact of local services in improving outcomes for children and young people is good.**

#### **Being healthy**

**15. The impact of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** Partnership working on health issues is good. Universal and targeted multi-agency services support parents and carers well in keeping children healthy. A well coordinated approach to promoting healthy lifestyles for schoolchildren and young people is effective, leading to good outcomes such as healthier eating in schools. Hospital services for children are generally satisfactory, with a very good environment for day-case surgery. Access to CAMHS is generally good, but the service for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is underdeveloped. Conversely, looked after children and young people enjoy priority access to CAMHS and receive a good service. There are good programmes for drug, alcohol and sex education and good services for young people who develop substance misuse problems. Healthcare for looked after children is good, and the particular needs of Black and minority ethnic groups and traveller families are addressed well.

#### **Staying safe**

**16. The impact of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Families and children in need of support, and children and young people at risk of harm, are well supported through a comprehensive range of preventative services, which also decrease the need for children to become looked after. Joint commissioning arrangements for looked after children, however, are underdeveloped. Local agencies share information well and make timely assessments and refer their concerns appropriately. Initial referral, assessment and case transfer arrangements in children's social care are well managed, and good multi-agency communication means that thresholds are mostly well understood. The quality of assessments varies from adequate to good. Child protection arrangements are robust, and protection plans are effective and are regularly reviewed. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is developing well with sound leadership, but it lacks capacity to undertake its wider safeguarding role. Serious case reviews are appropriately and thoroughly undertaken and action plans are implemented effectively, but not always within the required timescale. Vetting checks for staff in regular contact with children are adequate and improving. Children's services staff



receive good support from their managers and their access to training is at least adequate.

### Enjoying and achieving

**17. The work of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good.** Parents and carers are provided with good support and guidance, which is well targeted in the most disadvantaged areas. Support for early years and childcare providers is effective and there are enough places to give parents sufficient choice. The strategy for early years and childcare is good, using the existing SureStart programmes effectively to secure the expansion of children's centres to meet local need. The high quality work of school improvement services is reducing the number of schools causing concern and improving the quality of provision, particularly in primary schools and special schools. Effective use of national strategies is improving pupil performance in targeted schools. Standards of attainment are good overall. The achievement of 11 and 16 year olds is very good, compared to statistical comparators, but the proportion of pupils achieving good GCSEs in English and mathematics remains low. Children and young people of Black and minority ethnic heritage and those looked after by the council make good progress. The council has made good progress to reduce surplus places in schools, maintaining choice in local areas. Nearly all parents achieve their first choice of primary and secondary school. The guidance to parents for admissions to schools is fit for purpose. Pupil attendance and behaviour is good. Exclusions in primary and secondary schools have fallen, but remain slightly above the national average in secondary schools, and the rate of reintegration into mainstream schools is too low. There is very good support for the most vulnerable pupils, including children looked after by the council and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The council has an excellent policy for including pupils with special educational needs within mainstream schools. These pupils make good progress and achieve well. Parents have a real choice of schools for their children and relationships with the special educational service are very good. Children and young people access a good range of recreational, arts, sport and leisure opportunities, although some young people still believe that cost limits use.

### Making a positive contribution

**18. The impact of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** Services have been developed well to meet local need and combine very well to support the social and emotional development of children and young people. Intervention programmes that focus on aspects of play and relationships are particularly effective in helping children's and young people's emotional and social development. Initial work to challenge and promote anti-racism is a model of good practice. The effectiveness of training and support for peer mentoring is variable. Children and young people are routinely engaged in consultation; they have been well prepared for this level of involvement and make a full contribution through

strategic forums leading to the shaping of services. Children and young people of Black and minority ethnic heritage are well supported in school and aspects of integration are good. Multi-agency work to reduce anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending is generally good, although impact is variable. First-time offending is lower than similar areas, re-offending is reducing and specific initiatives targeted at local trouble spots are leading to reduced crime.

However, there remains a problem with young people's misuse of alcohol in certain areas. School exclusion and attendance rates are improving. The council's commitment to looked after children is a strong feature; there are opportunities for them to make their views known and they have helped to shape services. Support for care leavers is particularly good. Opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good and their views have helped to shape some council services. Services meet their needs in most cases and transitions are well managed, including most of those to adult services, although these options are limited.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

**19. The contribution of all local services in helping children and young people to achieve economic well-being is good.** Childcare provision reflects well the employment patterns of parents and carers in Hartlepool, with an appropriate number of childcare places available in the evenings and weekends. Almost all Key Stage 4 pupils, including young people who are in special schools, take part in a wide range of beneficial work experience. Within the last two years, a wide range of good initiatives have been implemented to engage young people who are at risk of leaving education without any qualifications, some of whom have challenging behaviour or are disadvantaged by a family history of long-term dependency on the benefit system. All partners collaborate well to ensure that 14–19 provision more closely meets the interests of young people and supports the development of courses which reflect business growth in Hartlepool. However, the monitoring of participation and progression for more vulnerable groups, such as young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and care leavers, is insufficient. Although the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training has improved, it remains high, as is the case for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The authority has utilised regeneration projects well to provide a range of education and training opportunities for young people. Most vulnerable young people, including young parents at risk of homelessness, ex-offenders and care leavers, gain adequate access to supervised or semi-independent housing. Many aspects of the care leaving service, more especially the pastoral and emotional support, is good, but too many care leavers progress to employment without further training. The quality of learning support offered by the education and training providers for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at least satisfactory, with some good provision.

## Service management

20. **The management of services for children and young people is good, as is the capacity to improve.** There is a powerful commitment to achieving the very best for children and young people. Leadership is good and there is exceptional unity of purpose. There is a strong sense of shared priorities and ownership by schools and external partners. Engagement with children and young people is excellent. Priorities clearly reflect the outcomes of consultation with children and young people, parents and carers. There is consistency in planning at all levels and plans are of high quality. However, medium term financial planning is under-developed. Priorities explicitly identify children and young people from Black and minority ethnic communities as a vulnerable group, and there are some good examples of support for them. Positive action is taken to deliver key priorities, such as improving educational attainment, prevention and inclusion.

21. The quality and extent of partnership working is outstanding. There is effective use of the community and voluntary sector. Political and managerial leadership is strong, and scrutiny is increasingly focused on key issues. The universal level of staff commitment, enthusiasm and pride is outstanding. Overall, there is good value for money and good improvements are being made, but benchmarking of costs is not embedded in management practice. Schools are very satisfied with almost all services and the support they receive. Overall, their response to the schools' survey is the best in the country. However, there are deficiencies in ICT provision to schools and in the social care software system. There are very thorough arrangements for performance management in place at partnership, elected member, corporate and departmental levels. However, there are deficiencies in management information available to social care managers, which should be overcome with implementation of a new software system. The involvement of service users in performance management is not as well developed as other aspects of consultation and engagement.

## Grades

Grades awarded:

4: outstanding; 3: good; 2: adequate; 1: inadequate

	Local services overall	Council services	Health services
Being healthy	3		
Staying safe	3		
Enjoying and achieving	3		
Making a positive contribution	3		
Achieving economic well-being	3		
Service management	3		
Capacity to improve	3	3	
Children's services		3	
The education service		3	
The social care services for children		3	
The health service for children			2

## Recommendations

### For immediate action

- Develop inter-agency guidance in relation to thresholds for referrals to children's social care.

### For action over the next six months

- Improve the quality of provision for children and young people with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties in order to meet their needs.
- Improve the quality of provision for pupils excluded from secondary schools and the rates of reintegration into mainstream schools.

- When the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) is reviewed, a high-level assessment of the financial implications should be incorporated.
- Undertake benchmarking of costs on a systematic basis.
- Improve joint commissioning and contracting arrangements in relation to out of authority placements for looked after children.
- Engage service users in the evaluation of services they receive on a systematic basis.

### **For action in the longer term**

- Improve the provision of occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services.
- Develop a wider range of courses for post-16 young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## **Main Report**

### **Outcomes for children and young people**

**22. Outcomes for children and young people in Hartlepool are good.**

**23. Children and young people are generally healthy.** Most children and young people who responded to the survey conducted as part of the inspection reported positive views of feeling quite or very healthy. Parents, carers, children and young people are provided with good information, advice and support. Teenage pregnancy rates are falling but remain above the national average. Deaths of babies around the time of birth, infants in the first year of life and children up to the age of 15 are all in line with the national average. Immunisation rates have improved and are now around the national average. The reported incidence of measles is low. Oral health is good. Access to CAMHS is good for most young people and admission placements are appropriate. The healthcare of looked after children is good, with 95% having had annual health and dental checks in the last 12 months. Healthcare for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is generally good, but there is a lack of capacity in some therapy services.

**24. The combined work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good, and Hartlepool is a safe place for children and young people to live.** Almost all children and young people responding to the inspection survey feel safe in school and in their local area. Few serious injuries occur on roads and an effective road safety education programme has reduced the numbers of those slightly injured. Agencies work effectively together to provide prompt identification and safeguarding of children at immediate risk of significant harm, including children with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities. These children receive a service from a specialist team with appropriate knowledge and communication skills. Child protection arrangements are well managed and effective practice means that the number of children whose names remain on the register for more than two years is lower than in similar authorities, while re-registration rates are also low. However, more children are referred to initial child protection conferences and this is reflected in slightly higher numbers on the register. Most initial assessments and almost all core assessments are completed on time, but data in relation to their numbers is unreliable, although the council is taking appropriate steps to address this. All children in need who are on the child protection register and those looked after are allocated to a qualified social worker. A wide range of preventative support is offered in Hartlepool. Fewer children are looked after than in similar authorities and they live in safe and mostly stable placements. Almost all looked after children have annual health assessments, and numbers who contribute to their statutory reviews, while lower than similar authorities, are improving. Numbers of children adopted from care and the timeliness of achieving this are very good, and better than similar authorities.

25. Looked after children and young people feel safe in their placements and are able to report their concerns. Their carers receive good support, training and rewards, but there are not enough local placements, so some children are placed at a distance. Children's cases are regularly reviewed and their participation in reviews is improving. Prospective adoptive families, and children for whom the plan is adoption, receive an exceptional service, although the adoption panel does not have adequate legal and administrative support. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. That promotes their inclusion. There is good partnership working for children with complex needs, but aspects of management and funding are preventing further integration.

26. **Children and young people achieve highly.** Almost all children and young people surveyed enjoy their education and feel they are doing very or quite well at school. The overall quality of childcare is in line with the national average. The quality of nursery education is at least satisfactory overall and more is good than found nationally. Children enter the initial stage in school with much lower than average abilities in key areas of learning. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with those in similar authorities and national averages at age seven. Pupils at age 11 perform above those in similar authorities in English and mathematics and the progress they make during their primary school education is well above that of children nationally. The majority of pupils aged 16 achieve five or more good GCSEs, in line with national averages, in 2006. The proportion of pupils achieving five or more good GCSE passes including English and mathematics is lower, but improving. Boys' achievement remains a concern, as it is nationally, but, at ages 11 and 16, schools are successful in narrowing the gender gap. The majority of vulnerable pupils, including those from Black and minority ethnic communities, children looked after by the council and young people with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities, achieve well when compared to their starting points and in comparison to similar groups nationally.

27. The proportion of schools causing concern to the council has reduced and is now low. The number of primary schools failing to meet the Government's targets for English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has fallen significantly from eight to one over the last three years. All secondary schools met the Government's minimum targets at the end of Key Stage 3 and for GCSE achievement in 2006. The numbers of permanent and temporary exclusions of pupils has fallen in both primary and secondary schools, but the number excluded from secondary schools was slightly above the national average in 2005. Although the majority of pupils permanently excluded from school receive the hours of education to which they are entitled, a small number do not, and the percentage of children and young people re-integrated into mainstream schools remains too low. Attendance has improved and is now above national averages in primary and secondary schools while the rate of unauthorised absence remains low and below national averages.

28. **Children and young people have a good range of opportunities to make decisions and take personal responsibility and many make a very good contribution to their communities.** Most children and young people, including those looked after by the council and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have the necessary skills and confidence to comment on and influence issues that matter to them. Almost all school children have been actively involved in the democratic process leading to the appointment of school council members and the UK Youth Parliament representative. All school children and young people involved in various participation forums are well prepared. They are bright and articulate and listen to others before arriving at a decision. They support and represent the views of others well and are becoming increasingly confident in their role.

29. Children and young people benefit from positive relationships with workers. Young parents and young carers are enjoying the support they receive and are gaining in confidence as a result. Children from Black and minority ethnic groups are achieving well at school and like living in the area. Children and young people are engaging with the programmes that exist to reduce anti-social behaviour, offending and re-offending. However, some young people are drinking excessive amounts of alcohol on Friday and Saturday nights. The number of first-time offenders is below that in similar authorities, and re-offending rates have reduced consistently over time and are now in line with similar areas. Opportunities to celebrate children and young people's successes are used well, with some very good examples for those who are looked after by the council. Care leavers are particularly pleased with the support services they receive and are very positive about their in-care experiences, although some have low aspirations for further and higher education. Children and young people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy good levels of support to help them participate in decision making.

**30. Children and young people are increasingly able to achieve economic well-being and most are well prepared for working life.**

Outcomes for almost all young people have improved to good levels, with most above that of similar authorities or at national averages. For a small number of young people, however, outcomes are satisfactory or low. Participation rates of young people in education, employment and training have improved, since 2004, from below to above the national average, which is good. Participation rates in work-based learning are also good. Success rates for Levels 1, 2 and 3, including work-based learning courses, is satisfactory, with some good success rates on A-level courses. Almost all Key Stage 4 pupils gain good work experience, including young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All schools provide a satisfactory range of vocational courses and a good range of enterprise activities.

31. A significant number of young people have benefited from a wide range of good education and training courses through regeneration activities. Care leavers' participation in education, employment and training is satisfactory, but too many progress to employment without further training. Almost all these young people live in decent housing. The participation of young offenders in education, employment and training is low and below the national target. The proportion of young people who gain Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 is satisfactory, but too many leave education and training at the age of 18, and do not progress to Level 3. Progression rates to higher education are low. The number of 16 to 18 year olds whose whereabouts is unknown has significantly reduced to below the national average. The number of young people who are not in education, employment or training, especially among young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, has reduced but remains high.

## **The impact of local services**

### **Being healthy**

**32. The work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good.** A good range of universal and targeted services helps parents and carers in keeping their children healthy. Access to childcare facilities is good and provided flexibly to meet identified needs. Health visitor contact rates are high. Very good multi-agency working is seen in the SureStart programmes, which promote healthy lifestyles for parents and pre-school children, particularly engaging those from hard to reach groups. A particularly good example is the Mams To Be course for pregnant teenagers. The level of smoking during pregnancy has reduced, and targets have been met, but is still high compared with the national average. The incidence of low birth weight is in line with the national average. Breastfeeding is actively promoted, and again health targets have been met, although initiation rates remain low.

Immunisation rates have improved to around the national average. There is a good, targeted health visitor service for travellers. The particular needs of Black and minority ethnic families are well addressed through, for example, a



SureStart project located in the Salaam Centre where a wide range of support, including health education, is provided for Asian families.

33. There is a well coordinated approach to promoting healthy lifestyles for children and young people. All schools are enrolled in the Healthy Schools initiative and at the time of inspection a creditable 29% had achieved New Healthy School status through meeting increased criteria. School nurses have begun to implement a good obesity strategy and are delivering comprehensive smoking prevention and cessation programmes in primary and secondary schools. Good programmes of drug, alcohol and sex education are delivered in imaginative ways in school and community settings, such as a mobile Youth Support bus which is well used and highly rated by users. Contraceptive services, including emergency hormonal contraception, are widely available and well publicised. There is a good forward-looking action plan aimed at tackling the high teenage pregnancy rate. Surveys indicate a good level of understanding of the factors important in living healthily, with some evidence that knowledge has been translated into practice in relation to healthy eating. There are good opportunities for sport and exercise, such as the popular FAST project football teams and the West View project involving young people in orienteering. Positive surveys show that a large majority of children and young people consider themselves to be quite or very healthy. Universal health screening is in place and all general practices offer child health surveillance. Access and waiting times for hospital in-patient and day care are good. Services for children in hospital are generally satisfactory, apart from the arrangements for emergency surgery highlighted in the Healthcare Commission Improvement review. The environment for day-case surgery is very good. There is good outreach provision through a hospital-based community paediatric nursing team.

34. A comprehensive self-assessment exercise has been undertaken to inform a new mental health strategy for children and young people. The length of wait for new cases to access CAMHS is satisfactory, though some parents say there are issues in relation to the timing of appointments and cancellations at short notice. Training and support provided by primary mental health workers for front line staff in health and other agencies are good. There are direct referral pathways agreed with various agencies, including the youth offending service and Connexions. There are good examples of services for young people with drug or alcohol problems, such as the Straightline project for young people found in possession of alcohol, which involves a multi-agency approach including the police, the A&E department and school. A positive survey shows that 96% of children and young people rate their lives as quite, or very, enjoyable. Management protocols for children and young people who self-harm are well developed and clear. There is a good diagnostic service for young children with possible autistic spectrum disorder. Transition of young people with mental health problems to the adult service is not always smooth as it lacks a specific policy.

35. There is a designated nurse for looked after children who, with help from the designated doctor/s, provides an excellent service undertaking and arranging health assessments and follow-up health care. Most health assessments are undertaken where children and young people live, enabling a user-friendly service and affording the opportunity for advice on other matters, such as sexual health and healthy living. The assessment service is also available to care leavers, and the nurse runs useful drop-in sessions for vulnerable young people living in supported housing. The nurse also provides good support and advice to carers; her input is very highly valued by looked after young people. Assessments are of good quality and are regularly reviewed. For looked after children who live outside Hartlepool, the nurse liaises with her counterparts in other areas to try and ensure an equally good service in relation to their health care needs. Looked after children and young people enjoy priority access to CAMHS and receive a good service.

36. The Care Coordination programme provides a good multi-agency approach to needs assessment for children under five who have learning disabilities. Care plans are developed and regularly reviewed, with good involvement of parents/carers. The process is now being rolled out to include children and young people up to the age of 18 years. The provision of short-break care and other family support for this group of children and young people is good. There is good clinical provision to meet their physical health needs, but this is not always well coordinated. There is no dedicated service for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities within CAMHS, which can result in a poorer service to families caring for children with the most challenging behaviour. The learning disability nursing service supports families well, but does not yet have sufficient help from a specialised psychiatrist or psychologist. A much appreciated social inclusion programme enables these children and young people to improve their health through a wide range of sport and leisure activities. The Healthy Schools project has an approach tailored to the particular needs of this group. Parents report an overall shortage of therapy services, with those that are available having long waits; this is particularly notable in respect of speech and language therapy and there is no paediatric occupational therapist. Some parents report difficulty in accessing appropriate equipment, including wheelchairs, for their children. Transition from paediatric care to adult health services is adequate but requires further development to provide a seamless progression.

### Staying safe

37. **The combined work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good.** Almost all children surveyed for this review and who were interviewed during inspection said that they feel safe in school and in their local area. Good action is taken to ensure that children and young people and carers know about key risks to their safety and how to deal with them, and good quality information is available in a number of community languages. However, less information is available for children and young people in relation to the risks posed by some adults. Initiatives, such as the school-based Crucial

Crew programme, are appropriate, well focused and targeted, and the Safer Hartlepool Partnership's fire safety programme provides secure medical cabinets for storage of medication.

38. Policies and systems to identify, assess and manage risk of harm are sound and most staff are well supported and trained. Health and safety assessments of facilities are rigorous and good advice is provided. The council and its partners have, through the contributions by young people, rightly prioritised bullying in the CYPP and have strengthened coordination and monitoring arrangements. However, some young people are still concerned that the effects of mentoring schemes are short-lived and that school-based anti-bullying schemes are not always fully confidential.

39. There is an impressive and comprehensive response to domestic violence, and all organisations, including the LSCB and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), accord this a high priority. Incidents of domestic violence are routinely reported and appropriate responses are made. Innovative schemes are in place, such as the outreach pilot between North Tees Women's Aid and the police, which is increasingly having a positive impact on numbers of women and children supported.

40. Families and children in need of support and children and young people at risk of harm are effectively supported. A good and creative range of preventative services, including those commissioned from the voluntary and community sector, are well coordinated through the Hartlepool Intervention Panel. Staff are mostly well informed about this provision; however, the online directory requires further work to make it easily accessible, especially for children and young people.

41. All agencies understand their role in keeping children safe, and children at risk of harm or in need are suitably referred and their cases promptly investigated. The generic social care duty service provides a valued screening service, within which thresholds for the involvement of social care are appropriate and consistently applied. Good multi-agency communication means that thresholds are mostly well understood, but a lack of specific written guidance increases the risk of inconsistency. Initial referral, assessment and case transfer arrangements are safe, timely and well managed. The quality of assessments varies from adequate to good, but some case records do not analyse risks effectively or reflect fully the quality of practice. Appropriate action is being taken to replace the council's electronic data system, which does not routinely provide sufficiently reliable data to support the effective performance management of services to vulnerable children. All children in need, those on the child protection register and looked after children are appropriately allocated to a qualified social worker.

42. Agencies work well together to safeguard children; inter-agency safeguarding policies are comprehensive and have been recently revised and reissued in accordance with government guidance. Child protection

arrangements are sound. Meetings to review the cases on the child protection register are well attended and robustly managed. The length of time for which children's names remain on the register has also reduced. Parents and carers are appropriately involved in plans to safeguard their children, but their experiences are not used in the development and redesign of services. Arrangements for Criminal Records Bureau and other vetting checks are adequate and improving. Most files seen during the inspection comply with statutory requirements and firm action has been taken to ensure that outstanding checks are completed.

43. Staff and carers receive at least satisfactory guidance and training within their own agencies and within multi-agency programmes; training and support for designated staff in schools and health settings is sound. A comprehensive approach to progressing the Common Assessment Framework incorporates a good focus on change management and the accreditation of learning. Children's services staff are well supported by their managers and have access to good quality and regular supervision. Their work is regularly and consistently audited, but these audits have yet to fully address the quality of practice.

44. The LSCB is well led, has appropriate representation and is effectively linked to other strategic groups. Good attention is paid to enabling committed members to contribute effectively, but the LSCB has not yet secured sufficient permanent funding or capacity to undertake its wider safeguarding role, or to strengthen multi-agency training and quality assurance processes. Serious case reviews are appropriately and thoroughly undertaken and action plans are effectively implemented. However, reviews are not always completed within required timescales and arrangements for producing independent overview reports are underdeveloped. Children's services staff use MAPPA to make an appropriate contribution to the Tees-wide arrangements for managing offenders who pose risks to children.

45. Information sharing is well managed and prompt action is taken to make sure that children do not become lost in the education or care system or when moving across local authority boundaries. Sound policies are implemented to ensure that all children have a school place and attend school regularly; for some young people, targeted group work has improved their attendance and given them a more positive view of school.

46. Proactive and well-resourced inter-agency support and protection enable children and young people to remain safely at home. Children are not looked after until all alternative avenues have been explored and so there are lower numbers of looked after children than in similar authorities. Decisions in relation to becoming looked after are made by managers at the right level of seniority.

47. Children and young people in foster care feel safe and are well cared for by carers who receive good training and rewards. However, there are insufficient placements to meet local needs, so some are placed a considerable distance away. Placement stability is good and children who have settled in out

of area placements are enabled to remain there. Looked after children, including those placed out of area, are reviewed regularly and participation in reviews has recently improved to an acceptable rate with the introduction of the Viewpoint software. Looked after children told inspectors that they are able to report concerns about their care and treatment and enjoy a good independent advocacy service, although the children's complaints service is only adequate.

48. Kinship care placements are a regular feature, as extended family systems are common; these placements are now assessed and supported by the Family Placement Team to the same rigorous standard as other foster placements. Good action has also been taken to begin to identify, support and review children in private foster care. The Adoption Social Work Team provides an excellent service to prospective adoptive families, and to children for whom the plan is adoption, although the legal and administrative support to the adoption panel is inadequate. Joint commissioning arrangements are not well developed, and this is significant for Hartlepool as a council with no in-house residential placements.

49. The demand for short-break services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has changed and a review of the reasons for this is underway, with good involvement of young people and their families. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support to access mainstream social and leisure opportunities which promote their inclusion. Parents and carers are offered assessments for services in their own right, in line with legal requirements, but the children's complaints service has not been sufficiently adapted for easy use by disabled children. The funding of placements for children with complex needs is successfully undertaken through good partnership arrangements, but differences in protocols, management and funding arrangements stand in the way of further integration of services.

## Enjoying and achieving

50. **The impact of local services to help children and young people enjoy and achieve is good.** Clear and helpful information is available to parents and carers in brochures through the children's information service and the council website. Good information and guidance is available to parents of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities about the services provided, including how the annual statutory review process works. The parent advice line provides good support and the service is valued by parents who use it.

51. The strategy for early years and childcare is good. The range of early years and childcare provision is targeted appropriately at areas in most need. There are sufficient places for those parents who require them. Good advice and information is on offer from the children's information system about the availability of places to give parents and carers sufficient choice. The quality of provision is improving. For example, the quality of childcare has improved due to more effective quality assurance, good support and training. Foundation

Stage training, and support for meeting the needs of all young children, is increasingly effective. Early years and childcare providers value the good range and quality of advice, training and support.

52. There have been good improvements in the attainment of pupils aged 11 and 14, and at a faster rate than the national average. Exam results for 16 year olds have continued to improve at an impressive rate over the last three years and the gap to the national average has been closed. However, the percentage of 16 year olds achieving five good GCSEs at grades A\*–C including English and mathematics, is too low compared to the national averages.

53. The council's strategy to support schools and intervene when necessary is very good. It is based on an excellent analysis of need and very good use of data. Partnership working with schools is highly effective and well planned, and targeted support and intervention is reducing the numbers of schools causing concern. The quality of leadership and management and educational provision inspected since September 2005 is good in Hartlepool. No schools are currently in Ofsted categories of concern. The council has taken effective action with schools causing concern. Experienced headteachers and advanced skills teachers are used to give effective support to other schools facing challenges.

54. The council has thorough and accurate data about the achievement of pupils across the borough. This information is used well with schools to target support and has resulted in increased attainment at Key Stage 2 and very good improvements in the percentage of pupils achieving five good GCSEs. The council is also making good use of the national strategies for primary and secondary education to improve educational performance for 11 and 14 year olds. Pupils' attainment has improved in schools receiving targeted support, particularly in narrowing the attainment gap between boys and girls at key points in their schooling, although as is the case nationally, more remains to be done.

55. The council has made good progress to reduce surplus places in schools, and planning for Building Schools for the Future is thoroughly integrated with plans to respond to declining pupil numbers. Admissions procedures prioritise places for children looked after by the council and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly all parents get a place for their children at their first-choice school. There is appropriate guidance to parents for admissions to schools.

56. Attendance in primary schools has remained similar to the national average and that of other similar areas. Secondary schools have worked hard to improve attendance, with the result that absence levels are lower than those found nationally and unauthorised absence is well below the national average. Targeted and coordinated support and intervention by the attendance service and behaviour support programme, as well as encouraging parents not to take holidays in term time by negotiating a discount scheme with a local travel agency, have brought about this good performance. No pupil was permanently

excluded from special schools in 2004/2005 and the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs excluded from mainstream schools has also reduced significantly. The percentage of pupils permanently excluded from secondary schools remains too high and the rate of reintegration of permanently excluded pupils into mainstream schools is too low.

57. Almost all permanently excluded pupils get full-time education, but for a very small number of pupils the provision is not yet adequate. Concerns exist about the overall quality of provision at the pupil referral unit, coupled with the challenging nature of some pupil's behaviour. Protocols are in place to support managed moves and hard to place pupils, but as yet have not made sufficient impact. The council is aware of and shares these concerns. A constructive debate with headteachers about the way forward is underway as part of the developing Hartlepool Education Improvement Partnership.

58. The range of provision to support pupils who are unable to attend school is mainly effective. The home and hospital tuition service and the support for pregnant school girls are good. The monitoring of provision for children educated at home is thorough. The provision for pupils with statements of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties is under review and the council is aware of the need to improve the current arrangements which are unsatisfactory at present.

59. There is a good range of recreational, arts, sport and leisure opportunities for children and young people, including those looked after by the council and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The accessibility of these opportunities is good overall, particularly for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Schools provide a comprehensive range of family learning, study support and extended school activities. The community and voluntary sector makes a valuable contribution to improving the enjoyment and achievement of young people.

60. Looked after children are supported very well in their education and, although their attainment is low at the end of some key stages, they make better progress at age 11 than looked after children do nationally. Their attendance at school remains low but is improving and currently no looked after children are permanently excluded. The council makes strenuous efforts to ensure that children and their carers are involved in setting and reviewing the targets in their personal education plans, or the individual education plans of those with special educational needs. Most looked after children have good quality personal education plans. Every school has a designated teacher for looked after children and the council ensures there is good training and support for this role.

61. There is excellent support to enable pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to enjoy their education and achieve. Statements of special educational need (SEN) are timely, well written and meet needs, with parents and pupils involved in their development and review. The quality of information,

advice and support from SEN services to early years and childcare settings and schools is very good. Early identification and action ensure that support is targeted to young children who require it. Schools make good use of quality provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The achievement and progress of pupils with SEN is good. The council's commitment to inclusion is reflected in the high proportion of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are educated in mainstream schools; those who are not are educated in local special schools that meet their individual needs very effectively. Arrangements for the dual registration of children with SEN enable the two special schools to work supportively and flexibly with mainstream schools without the necessity for all children to have a statutory statement. Parents are very supportive of these arrangements and spoke highly of their choice of schools and the high quality of curriculum and extra-curricular activities available for their children as a result.

### **Making a positive contribution**

**62. The work of all local services in helping children and young people to contribute to society is good.** Children and young people's social and emotional development is promoted effectively through early years settings and schools. Services have been developed to meet local need and agencies work well together to deliver effective responses. There is a wide range of opportunities for children and young people and parents to access support. Many of these programmes are of the highest quality. Mentoring schemes and parenting skills programmes which focus on developing aspects of play and relationships are particularly good at improving outcomes for some of the most hard to reach and at risk children. Actions to reduce bullying are embedded in school practice. The effectiveness of training and support to peer mentors is variable and therefore confidentiality is sometimes an issue.

**63.** Children and young people who face significant change and challenge in their lives are provided with good levels of support. For example, work with young parents, children who have witnessed domestic violence, and behaviour management programmes are all particularly effective. Support for Black and minority ethnic children and young people with their education and some aspects of integration are good. Some excellent work has taken place in challenging racism. Transition support through early years, primary and secondary schools is a strong feature. Learning mentors in schools and services for young carers are well developed. The youth service is providing a range of effective programmes, for example, work to raise awareness of sexual health and targeted work with specific groups such as deaf children.

**64.** The council has a strong commitment to encourage children and young people to participate. The Participation strategy provides a sound basis for this work. All agencies are committed to this agenda and are progressively empowering children and young people. Effective forums exist for local issues to be heard and prioritised from across the borough. The views and aspirations of children and young people are demonstrably helping to shape services. For



example, Young Voice ideas to provide solutions for reducing children and young people's anti-social behaviour have been implemented. Overall, children and young people who represent others demonstrate good social adjustment and responsible citizenship. Children and young people of Black and minority ethnic heritage are included in participation forums.

65. There is good multi-agency work to reduce anti-social behaviour by children and young people, for example, the Hartlepool Intervention programme and the Youth Inclusion programme. Improved school exclusion and attendance rates are having a positive impact. New methods of community policing are effective. Intervention programmes are well targeted and involve a broad range of coordinated activities, including family-based programmes. There is good take-up by young people of the community services provided, for example, youth clubs. The FAST football programme is effectively targeting and engaging hard to reach young people and supporting their social and emotional development. The youth service is working with many vulnerable and hard to reach young people. The relationships between workers and children and young people are good and attendance by young people is sustained over time. However, there are no concessionary rates for children under 16 to use mainstream sports and leisure facilities. There are problems with young people's misuse of alcohol in some communities, where interventions such as the community warden scheme have had limited effect.

66. Action to reduce offending and re-offending is good. Youth justice board targets are being met consistently in most areas. Action taken by the police to evaluate impact is good and there is evidence that community and neighbourhood policing initiatives are reducing crime in specific areas. The youth offending service provides a good range of activities and reparation projects for those young people who offend and are at risk of offending. Work with families and individual young people is particularly effective, helping to reduce offending behaviour and raise children and young people's self-esteem. The support to meet the mental health needs of children and young people is effective. Good arrangements are in place to support offenders on release from custody. Young people who have served their sentence are supported well in the community, resulting in good outcomes. Educational and training support to meet the needs of children and young people working with the youth offending service is variable. Work to support those over 16 years into employment, training and education, and mentoring schemes to support engagement in education for young offenders, are underdeveloped.

67. The council has a strong commitment to the involvement of looked after children. Corporate parenting is a strong feature. Opportunities for looked after children to make their views known are good and young people are helping to shape services, in particular placement stability. Participation in both statutory reviews and aspects of care planning has improved. The participation officer has helped looked after children to have a voice and develop their skills and confidence in speaking out. Young people have access to a good independent advocacy service. Representations made by young people are considered and

acted on. Looked after children's successes are being celebrated, leading to raised self-esteem. Arrangements for looked after children to have contact with their families are good. The support for care leavers is particularly good, including aspects of transition, and young people value the very good support provided by workers in the team. The aspirations of some care leavers for further and higher education is low, while the effectiveness of the complaints process is limited.

68. Opportunities for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make a positive contribution are good and their views have shaped some council services. For example, a DVD produced by young people at Catcote Special Needs School has helped to break down barriers in the community and raised the confidence of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Aspects of integration are good, for example, day care services and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. The involvement of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in education reviews is good and they benefit from a full programme of social outings, including out of school activities and community leisure pursuits. Good provision is available to support disabled children and their families. Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with severe communication difficulties cannot use the complaints procedure; Viewpoint software is being enhanced to enable this. The transition process to adult services is well managed in most areas, but service options are limited.

### **Achieving economic well-being**

69. **The work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good. Children and young people are prepared well for working life.** The authority's childcare strategy is very effective in removing barriers to employment and training for parents and carers. A wide range of good childcare provision, such as day care, sessional care, out of school day care and regulated child-minding provision, reflects the employment patterns in Hartlepool well. For example, with employment patterns in the call centre sector, the authority has been very successful in supporting childcare providers to offer more flexible provision, such as drop-in childcare and childcare provision in the evenings and weekends. Childcare provision, including respite care, for the carers of young people aged 5 to 18 with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. A comprehensive range of information on childcare, childcare cost, health, financial support and employment is available to parents and carers. Partnership working between Jobcentre Plus, children's centres and voluntary and community venues that provide childcare is good in offering advice on employment and training opportunities. The range of family learning opportunities is satisfactory and is helping carers and parents to progress to training or employment.

70. A wide range of good strategies and initiatives prepares young people for working life. All schools provide a range of vocational subjects, which increasingly offer better progression routes to post-16 education and training. Almost all Key Stage 4 pupils, including those in special schools, take part in a wide range of beneficial work experience such as computer repairs. Learn2work, an education–business link organisation, and the schools collaborate well to provide activities for young people to gain an understanding of business and enterprise. In one special school, a wide range of enterprise and work-related projects provide particularly good and interesting opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A significant number of young people benefit from the arrangements to attend local colleges for part of their studies. The overall impact of these arrangements has improved achievement rates at Key Stage 4 and increased participation rates in post-16 education and training from below the national averages to above. Within the last two years, a wide range of good initiatives has been implemented to engage young people who are at risk of leaving education without any qualifications, have challenging behaviour or are disadvantaged by a family history of long-term dependency on the benefit system. Some of these young people improved their personal skills and self-confidence by spending part of a week with employers and the remainder of the week in school. In two schools, however, there are still too many young people who leave without gaining any qualifications. Advice and guidance for young people in schools is generally satisfactory, but for a few this advice is not sufficiently comprehensive.

71. The strategy for 14–19 education and training is effective in improving participation and success for young people. The Tees Valley LSC and the authority collaborate well to ensure that the provision more closely meets the interests of young people, for example, through the detailed analysis of 14–19 provision and by supporting the development of new courses that reflect the business growth in Hartlepool. Four groups take responsibility for implementing the various aspects of this strategy, including raising standards, staff development and quality assurance. Collaboration between Hartlepool College of further education and Catcote School has been effective in developing good provision for young people with moderate to profound learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This provision offers learners the opportunity to develop independent living skills in addition to basic vocational skills. However, the monitoring of participation and progression for the more vulnerable groups, such as young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and care leavers, is insufficient. The progression of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to work-based provision is low. Although the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training has improved, it remains high for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Connexions, the authority and other partners have been very successful in significantly reducing the number of young people whose whereabouts are not known. Young people have satisfactory access to provision at pre-entry and entry level.

72. A significant proportion of regeneration funds is allocated specifically to improve the education and employability of children and young people. Financial resources, including the neighbourhood renewal fund and the new deal for communities fund, are used effectively to provide very well-resourced learning centres within two of the most deprived areas. The authority has recognised the significance of regeneration projects in helping young people to gain training and employment, and good arrangements are in place to provide a range of education and training opportunities for young people. The authority has good strategies to consult the local community and the level of involvement of young people is good.

73. The authority is in the process of implementing plans to improve the availability of decent housing in general. Currently, the arrangements with the private and social housing sectors are generally satisfactory in providing a range of housing for young people. However, the sharing of up to date housing information between partners is insufficiently developed. Most vulnerable young people, including young parents at risk of homelessness, ex-offenders and care leavers, gain adequate access to supervised or semi-independent housing. However, at times there is insufficient appropriate accommodation for vulnerable young people, with some use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

74. The support for care leavers to achieve economic well-being is satisfactory. Many aspects of the care leaving service, more especially the pastoral and emotional support, are good. While the authority and Connexions are working well through a number of projects and initiatives to support these young people, too many leave education or training too early. There is effective support from all relevant agencies to help looked after children or young people who have substance dependencies, young parents or those who are involved with the youth justice system. The effectiveness of the care leaving service is compromised by the fact that its location is not readily accessible to the young people, and not within proximity of other services which these young people need to use.

75. The quality of learning support offered by the education and training providers for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is at least satisfactory, with some good provision. Connexions provide effective guidance for these young people. They have a good level of involvement in discussions to ensure better coordination of their education, health and social care support. The take-up of direct payments is low despite a user-friendly approach. The arrangements for transition planning are good, with appropriate representation from the relevant agencies.

### **Service management**

76. **The management of services for children and young people is good.** Ambition is good. The council and its partners provide excellent leadership for children's services. There are clear and challenging ambitions for children and young people in Hartlepool, a strong shared commitment to them

and an exceptional unity of purpose. The community strategy places a strong emphasis on children and young people. Vision and ambitions are set out well in the CYPP and key outcomes for children and young people are incorporated in the Local Area Agreement.

77. Children and young people have been effectively engaged in an extensive consultation process about aims and priorities, and a children and young people's version of the plan was produced by Hartlepool Young Voices, a group of young people supported by Barnardos. There are two young people on the Local Strategic Partnership and they are well supported. There is further representation on the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Children and young people feel confident that their aspirations and views are taken fully into account.

78. Prioritisation is good. Key priorities are clearly set out in the CYPP and there is a strong sense of shared priorities and ownership by schools and external partners. Strategic partnership meetings, for example, demonstrate an embedded pragmatic approach to committing resources across agencies. The approach to engagement of children and young people is excellent. There has been an extensive process of consultation with large numbers of children and young people, and intensive engagement with a smaller number, particularly through Diamond 9, a process of facilitated discussion leading to identification of priorities. The priorities clearly reflect the outcomes of consultation with children and young people, parents and carers and these are taken as the starting point for the CYPP. There is extensive ongoing consultation with children and young people underpinning children's services planning and decision making, including involvement in the appointment process for the Director, Assistant Directors and many other posts, as well as feedback on how their engagement can be made even more effective.

79. The CYPP incorporates a clear high level action plan and is underpinned by high quality lower level plans containing three-year priorities and a one-year action plan. There is consistency in plans at all levels. Resources are allocated appropriately to priorities, but medium term financial planning is underdeveloped as there is no reference in the CYPP or some key lower level plans to their financial implications.

80. The needs of Black and minority ethnic children and young people are prioritised and acted on effectively. The CYPP identifies this group as vulnerable, alongside looked after children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are examples of good support for BME children and young people, for example, through the Salaam Centre and the Ethnic Minority Achievement Team.

81. There is good evidence of robust action to deliver key priorities. This includes excellent support for improving educational attainment in schools, widespread adoption of a preventative approach and a very effective approach to inclusion. These actions have had a very positive impact.

82. Capacity to deliver outcomes for children and young people is good. The fact that Hartlepool is the second smallest unitary council has been turned into a significant strength rather than a weakness. The quality and extent of partnership working at all levels in all outcome areas, and the strong personal networks which exist across all sectors, are outstanding. There is effective use of the very extensive community and voluntary sector. The exceptional quality of partnership working contributes significantly to the high quality of provision in almost all service areas.

83. There is very strong commitment to delivering the best possible services to children and young people from key elected members, such as the Mayor, portfolio holder and Scrutiny Forum chair. There are good reporting arrangements and clear roles, good leadership and appropriate challenge. The Corporate Parenting Forum is strengthening the input from children and young people and becoming more focused on the achievements of looked after children and their recognition. The contribution of the Scrutiny Forum is improving. Good engagement with children and young people is to be enhanced by direct representation of six young people on the forum. It is becoming more focused on making an impact on important issues.

84. There is good senior management capacity within the children's services department. The level of commitment, enthusiasm and pride in staff at all levels in delivering quality services to Hartlepool is outstanding. Vacancies are low. There is strong internal consultation and communication.

85. Overall, good value for money is being delivered and significant areas of overspend are examined rigorously, though benchmarking of costs is not embedded in management practice. Education costs are about average and social care costs a little above average, with mostly good and some outstanding services. The proportion of surplus school places is low and planning is underway to respond to projected longer term reductions in pupil numbers over the next 10 years. The community asset of schools is well recognised; Dyke House is an outstanding example of a community hub, and the inclusive approach to developing Building Schools for the Future proposals is placing benefit for the whole community at its heart. There is some pooling of resources across the five Tees Valley councils, for example, the emergency duty social work service is run by Stockton-on-Tees on their behalf. These all provide better value for money. Overall, management of financial, human and material resources is good.

86. Support for school improvement is strong, and the response to the Audit Commission's schools' survey is outstanding – overall the best in the country – with high satisfaction for 74 of the 76 aspects of support and service.

87. A good start has been made on developing a multi-agency workforce strategy. The Integrated Working Information Sharing programme is a major programme to deliver change, including a multi-agency modular NVQ Level 4 training programme for 550 staff across the sectors.

88. There are some significant capacity issues or deficits, but they are mostly being addressed effectively. There are high school budget surpluses, but the Schools Forum has agreed in principle that a clawback scheme should be introduced and tighter auditing of the use of surpluses has been introduced. High costs of home to school transport for special needs pupils, which are not attributable to the requirements of the excellent provision for such pupils, are being addressed through a corporate transport review. High levels of sickness within children's social care are being addressed by a series of management actions, supported and monitored corporately.

89. ICT infrastructure and support have some important deficiencies. The system does not provide effectively for modern school requirements and the social care system has poor analytical capability. A new children's software system has been purchased and, when fully operational, this should resolve the current deficiencies. The ICT contract is being reviewed to secure improvements but a solution which fully meets schools' requirements may be some time off.

90. Performance management is adequate overall. There are very thorough arrangements for performance management in place at partnership, member, corporate and departmental levels. Performance is reported quarterly to the portfolio holder, and this includes enhanced analysis for certain vulnerable groups and a review of progress with the departmental plan. There is good analysis of school performance, including support for self-evaluation, and effective challenge and support has contributed significantly to improved attainment in schools.

91. There are currently important gaps in performance management in social care, though these should be rectified shortly. There are deficiencies in the management information available to managers, with effective cessation over the past six months. Implementation of the new integrated children's system should provide much improved information. There are, however, several examples of good performance management: detailed reviews of external placements and increased fostering have led to better provision and substantial savings; re-registration rates have been reduced by introducing control points in decision making.

92. Looked after children are involved well in assessing the services they receive. However, overall the involvement of service users in performance management has not been developed in as consistent a manner as other aspects of consultation and engagement.

## **Annex: The children and young people's section of the corporate assessment report**

1. The council is performing well overall. Strong political commitment to very effective partnership working has resulted in good outcomes for children and young people. Good levels of safety are maintained and vulnerable groups are generally well supported. There is a satisfactory youth service and the youth offending service is judged as good overall with adequate management.
2. There is exceptional unity of purpose in the authority to ensure that every Hartlepool child matters. Vision and ambitions are set out well in the CYPP, with comprehensive priorities reflecting the Every Child Matters agenda. Key priorities include the continuation of impressive improvements in educational attainment, preventative work and inclusion. Planning is consistent and of a high quality but financial implications are not explicit in plans. There is good value for money overall and very thorough arrangements for performance management.
3. The combined work of all local services in securing the health of children and young people is good. Health education and provision is generally good, although there is a weakness in the provision of CAMHS to those children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good services are provided for vulnerable groups, especially for looked after children and those with substance misuse problems. There is, however, a lack of capacity in some therapy services, such as speech therapy.
4. The combined work of all local services in keeping children and young people safe is good. Nearly all children responding to the inspection survey feel safe and a good road safety education programme has effectively reduced the numbers of injuries. Agencies work effectively together to promptly identify and safeguard those at risk of harm. Good child protection practice has resulted in a high number being removed quickly from the register with low re-registration rates.
5. The combined work of all local services in helping children and young people to enjoy their education and recreation and to achieve well is good. Parents and carers receive good support and guidance. Schools are very satisfied with almost all services and the support they receive, while their response to the schools' survey is the best in the country. Standards of attainment are good overall, particularly given the socio-economic issues in the area. Pupil attendance and behaviour are good. A small number of permanently excluded pupils do not receive the level of education to which they are entitled and reintegration into mainstream schooling remains low. Good progress is made by vulnerable groups, including Black and minority ethnic pupils and looked after children. Pupils with special educational needs are very well integrated into mainstream school provision. The high quality of school improvement services has reduced the number of schools causing concern, with



no schools currently in Ofsted categories. Children and young people are able to access a wide range of recreational and leisure opportunities.

6. The combined work of all local services in helping children and young people contribute to society is good. Services combine well to support the social and emotional development of children and young people. Although there are very good examples of promoting anti-racism, members of the Black and minority ethnic groups have limited opportunities to help shape services. Children and young people are, however, routinely engaged in consultation and some do participate in decision making at a high level. Support for care leavers and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, although the effectiveness of the complaints process is limited.

7. The combined work of all local services in helping children and young people achieve economic well-being is good. Childcare provision meets the needs of parents and carers, particularly given employment patterns. There is a wide range of beneficial work experience for Key Stage 4 pupils, and partners combine well to ensure that 14–19 provision meets the needs and interests of young people. Monitoring the participation and progression of vulnerable groups is underdeveloped and the specific level of participation in education, employment or training by those young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is too low. Many aspects of the care leaving process are good, particularly pastoral and emotional support, but there are too many young people leaving education or training before completion.



# Joint area review

Report for children and young people  
Hartlepool

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## Report for children and young people about the services they receive in Hartlepool

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and doing well at school and as they grow up
- Making a positive contribution to society
- Being successful in whatever they choose to do when they are adults

## **Why should I read this?**

The law says that inspectors must look at and then report on how well local services serve children and young people in an area. This is called a "review". Inspectors visited your area recently. You might like to read this, or the full report which you can find on Ofsted's website, to find out what they had to say.

## **What did the inspectors do?**

Nine inspectors visited Hartlepool in November and December 2006 so that they could get a feel of what life is like for children and young people in the area. They:

- ❖ listened to a number of children and young people they met at youth clubs, children's centres and schools, especially in the Dyke House ward of Hartlepool
- ❖ talked with adults working with children and young people (like social workers, teachers, youth workers, nurses, doctors, police officers and councillors)
- ❖ spoke to parents and other people caring for children
- ❖ heard from the council and other agencies what it thinks about the services it provides for children
- ❖ read a lot of reports; and
- ❖ visited services used by children to see things for themselves.

The inspectors also looked at how well particular children are doing, like those children in council care or those who have a learning difficulty or disability.

## **How well are children and young people doing in Hartlepool?**

- ❖ Most children and young people are healthy,
- ❖ Children and young people appear to be safe.
- ❖ Most children and young people enjoy and do well at school,
- ❖ Many children and young people make a good contribution to their schools and the area in which they live.
- ❖ The young people who continue their studies after the age of 16 are doing increasingly well.

**What were the main things children and young people told inspectors about your area?**

- ❖ Most children and young people feel healthy. There are good opportunities generally for sport and exercise.
- ❖ Almost all young people feel safe at school and in their local area, although some are concerned about bullying.
- ❖ Children who are looked after by the council feel safe where they live and that they can report any concerns they may have.
- ❖ Looked after children within Hartlepool value highly the support they receive, particularly from the nursing service.
- ❖ Almost all children enjoy their education and feel that they are doing well at school.
- ❖ Most children and young people are skilled and confident enough to comment on and influence issues that matter to them in schools and their local communities.
- ❖ Children and young people consistently say they enjoy their lives in Hartlepool.
- ❖ They are increasingly well prepared for joining higher education or gaining employment.
- ❖ Children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are generally well supported, particularly in schools.

**What things did the inspectors say are good for children and young people in your area?**

- ❖ Services provided for children and young people are good. The Mayor, councillors and council workers are very clear about the needs of local children and young people. They are working hard to meet those needs. Inspectors feel that services will continue to get better.
- ❖ The range and quality of services for the under 5s are good.
- ❖ There are many good examples of help provided for young people to help them become, and to stay, healthy. Good support is provided to those with drug and substance misuse problems.
- ❖ The council and partners work well together to keep children and young people safe, particularly those who are at risk of harm.
- ❖ Services also work well together to support the social and emotional development of children and young people.
- ❖ Good work is being done by the council and its partners to reduce the number of young people getting into trouble with the police.

- ❖ Children and young people, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported to access recreation, arts, sport and leisure.
- ❖ The council also tries very hard to make sure that children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are able to go to ordinary schools.
- ❖ Children and young people are helped to do their best and achieve well at school. Attendance at, and behaviour in, schools is good.
- ❖ Black children and those from minority ethnic groups and those who are looked after by the council make good progress in school.
- ❖ Some excellent work has been done by the council to challenge racism.
- ❖ There are many good opportunities for children and young people to make their views heard and to take part in making decisions about services.
- ❖ Services work well together to ensure that the needs and interests of young people aged between 14 and 19 are met.

### **What things are not so good for children and young people?**

- ❖ The council and its partners need to make sure that appropriate action is taken at the right time for children in need.
- ❖ Provision for children and young people with behaviour, emotional and social problems needs to improve.
- ❖ Pupils who are excluded from secondary schools need a better service and more help to return to those schools.
- ❖ There need to be more occupational, speech and language therapists to meet the demand from children and young people.
- ❖ Young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities need to be encouraged more to follow courses after the age of 16, and to have more choice of courses.
- ❖ Too many teenagers are still getting pregnant despite the advice and support they get.
- ❖ Some young people in certain areas of Hartlepool are drinking too much alcohol on Friday and Saturday nights.
- ❖ Too few young people who offend are taking part in education, employment or training after leaving school.
- ❖ The transfer of young people with mental health problems from children's to adult services sometimes needs to be smoother.
- ❖ There are not enough local foster parents, so some looked after children are placed too far away from their home areas.



# Hartlepool Youth Service Report

Hartlepool Children's Services Authority Area

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Publication Type	Published	Reference no.
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## Introduction

1. The Youth Service in Hartlepool is located within the Local Authority Children's Services. The service is accountable to the Assistant Director, Planning and Service Integration. In addition to the head of service and an operations manager, there are 7 full time and 82 part time youth workers to 20 full-time equivalent (fte) posts.
2. Youth work is delivered from three main centres and four satellite centres as well as through mobile and detached provision. The service gives priority to 13-19 year olds. There are 9,127 young people in the 13-19 age range. Expenditure from the local authority budget was £127 per head for 13-19 year olds in 2005/06. The budget made available by the local authority for 2006/07 is £994,279 augmented by £66,000 from external sources. The service reached 29.23% of young people aged 13-19 in 2005/6, which is well above the national benchmark of 25%. In terms of its more regular contact with young people it successfully engages 24%.
3. The Joint Area Review (JAR) was enhanced to enable coverage of the youth service. Inspectors considered the youth service's self-assessment and met with officers and a cross section of staff and partners. They reviewed key service documentation and observed a sample of youth work sessions in Dyke House as part of the JAR neighbourhood study, as well as work in other parts of the borough.

## Part A: Summary of the report

### Main findings

#### Effectiveness and value for money

4. Hartlepool borough council provides an adequate youth service and delivers satisfactory value for money. It is reaching a high proportion of young people in the 13-19 age group, many of whom exhibit challenging behaviour. Staff have worked hard to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries for behaviour and most young people are making reasonable progress in developing self-confidence and social skills. There is well-targeted provision that is effectively meeting the needs of some vulnerable groups. High vacancy levels and long-term sickness absence have had a negative impact on the quality and quantity of provision. Premises are of a high standard and located appropriately in areas of high need. The involvement of young people in planning, delivery and evaluation of provision is under-developed. Plans are poorly defined, and the management of the curriculum weak. The service collaborates well with a wide range of partners to share resources and expertise. Managers communicate well with their staff and have a good grasp of what needs to be done to improve the service. The service makes good use of the funds available to it.

## Strengths

- Youth workers are responsive to the complex needs and significant obstacles to achievement that many young people are experiencing
- Young people's attendance at youth work activities is regular and sustained.
- There is some effective and well targeted provision
- Premises are well maintained, accessible and of a high quality
- There are good strategic links with a wide range of voluntary and statutory partners.

## Areas for development

- Very low numbers of young people achieve accredited outcomes
- Curriculum management is weak
- The service's strategic plans and priorities are insufficiently defined
- Strategies and plans to support equality, inclusion and diversity are underdeveloped
- Involvement of young people in planning and evaluating youth service provision at strategic and operational level is limited.

## Key aspect inspection grades

Key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	2
	Quality of youth work practice	2
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	2
3	Strategic and operational leadership and management	2

*The table above shows overall grades about provision. Inspectors make judgements based on the following scale:*

**Grade 4:** *Excellent/outstanding: a service that delivers well above minimum requirements for users:*

**Grade 3:** *Good: a service that consistently delivers above minimum requirements for users:*

**Grade 2:** *Adequate: a service that delivers only minimum requirements for users:*

**Grade 1:** *Inadequate: a service that does not deliver minimum requirements for users.*

## Part B: The youth service's contribution to *Every Child Matters* outcomes

5. The service's contribution to the *Every Child Matters* outcomes is adequate overall though there are good examples of work in some areas. Of particular note is the high priority given to providing a wide range of sexual health advice and services at youth centres, through detached work and from the service's mobile provision. Young people value this provision highly and there is evidence that it is having a positive impact on their sexual attitudes and behaviour. The service is effectively supporting a small number of young people through the UK youth parliament group and the youth opportunities fund group to participate in decision-making and democratic processes. Youth centres are well attended and valued by those who use them as safe and welcoming places to go. Detached workers have developed good relationships with young people who congregate on the streets and are using mediation skills well to tackle local concerns about anti-social behaviour.

## Part C: Commentary on the key aspects

### Key Aspect 1: Standards of young people's achievements and the quality of youth work practice

6. Standards of young people's achievement are satisfactory overall. Attendance is regular and sustained over time. Young people have formed positive relationships with staff. Those attending open access provision, many of whom exhibit challenging behaviour, value the safe environment that youth centres provide and are making reasonable progress in developing their levels of self-confidence and social skills. Young people respond well to sexual health awareness and drugs programmes which have challenged their attitudes and resulted in them taking increased personal responsibility for their health. Those engaged in special projects learn about political and democratic processes. Involvement in multi media and performing and creative arts provide a useful means by which young people can consider and explore issues of interest.

7. Young people at risk of exclusion are making good progress in literacy and communication skills from a low baseline of attainment and are working towards achieving accreditation for their work through ASDAN and the Open College Network. Overall, young people's involvement in reviewing and recording their progress is limited.

8. Young people involved in the UK youth parliament support group and in the Youth Opportunities Fund grant-givers group are developing an understanding of democratic processes as well as self-confidence, planning and presentational skills. Outside of these, insufficient opportunities exist for young people to demonstrate initiative or willingness to take on responsibility either within their projects or in their community.

9. The quality of youth work practice is satisfactory overall. In most practice, boundaries for behaviour have been established and are maintained by the constant efforts of staff. Workers have a good knowledge of their local communities and of the needs of young people with whom they work. They have made good links with other services to extend the opportunities available to young people. There are some good examples of youth workers responding imaginatively to young people's needs. At Throston youth centre, for example, a group of young men with low self esteem and poor school achievement were helped to teach music skills to primary school children.

10. Staff are clear about the educational focus of youth work but a minority are struggling to apply this principle and implement the service curriculum effectively. Programmes in much of the open access provision are narrow in range and dominated by the interests of young men. The quality of planning and evaluation is variable. In a high proportion of provision, plans focus on activities rather than learning outcomes and young people are insufficiently involved in the process.

## Key Aspect 2: Quality of curriculum and resources

11. A curriculum statement sets out the service's broad aims and values. This document is poorly aligned to *Every Child Matters* outcomes and is insufficiently linked to the priorities that have been identified in the service's analysis of need. Management responsibility for curriculum development has not been allocated and too little guidance is provided for staff to help them develop expertise in implementing the curriculum.

12. The curriculum lacks breadth and the extent to which opportunities are available across the borough is limited. For example, although mentioned in the documentation, there are significant gaps in the provision of information and communications technology (ICT), citizenship and volunteering and the promotion of racial and cultural diversity. Detached work, again identified as a priority, is currently available in only two neighbourhoods and delivered by two workers. Plans to develop this work have been hindered by staff vacancies.

13. Nonetheless, young people's needs are effectively identified through discussion with partners and staff, observations of practice and statistical data. The service has identified priority groups with whom it will work and there is some well targeted provision for young carers, deaf young people, young people with learning difficulties and young people at risk of exclusion to ensure that they are able to access recreational and voluntary learning opportunities. The service is reaching a high proportion of young people in the 13-19 age range and open access provision is very well attended. The needs of young women are not being met effectively. There is a significant gender imbalance in the participation of young men and women in the service.

14. High levels of vacancies and long-term sickness absence have had a negative impact on the service's effectiveness. The situation has now been resolved and the recent appointment of five full-time professional youth workers has greatly

enhanced the service's capacity to improve. Service delivery is heavily reliant on part-time staff, many of whom are new to the service and not yet qualified.

15. Specialist youth workers such as those providing sexual health programmes are well trained, demonstrate a high level of expertise and have up to date knowledge. There is a very good in-house training programme that responds well to identified development needs. Mandatory training, such as health and safety, is not co-ordinated or monitored effectively. The induction programme does not provide an adequate introduction to service policies and procedures.

16. Premises used by the service are well maintained, accessible, warm and inviting. They are well located in disadvantaged communities. The mobile unit is well equipped and is fully accessible for those with mobility difficulties. There is a good bank of resources, accessible to all staff. Access to ICT is poor.

17. Effective safeguarding procedures are in place, including health and safety audits for accommodation, in-house child protection training and risk assessments for off-site visits. A child protection issue arising during the inspection was dealt with appropriately. Criminal Records Bureau clearance processes are effective.

### Key Aspect 3: Leadership and management

18. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. However, the service's plans and priorities are poorly defined. The annual plan is insufficiently strategic and lacks ambition. Many service policies are out of date and are not supported by procedural guidelines. Despite this, most staff have a reasonable grasp of the service's aims and priorities for improvement. Managers make regular visits to practice, know their service well and have produced an open and accurate self-assessment.

19. The service does not have an equalities and diversity strategy or specific plans to tackle the low uptake of service provision by young women and young people with disabilities. This aspect is unsatisfactory. Although overtly racist remarks by young people are challenged, the promotion of positive race relations does not feature in the curriculum.

20. The recent introduction of termly planning and evaluation meetings, the development of supportive planning documentation and the revised approach to supervision and staff development have helped staff to focus on the importance of planning and evaluating their work. Staff speak very highly of the time and support they receive from managers and as a result morale is high, despite the difficult circumstances caused by high vacancy levels.

21. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The service has an electronic management information system that enables reliable but limited data collection. There is a good system of peer inspection run in conjunction with a neighbouring authority, which is making some impact on improving performance. The inspection visits are, however, infrequent and judgements made are inconsistent. Managers have not established measurable targets for the service or

for staff. Service level agreements with commissioned services lack rigour and expectations are not always made clear. More generally, the service does not evaluate sufficiently the impact of provision.

22. The involvement of young people in planning and evaluating provision is weak. Neither are they involved in the management or quality assurance of the service. An entitlement statement included in the service's curriculum document is not monitored and young people are not aware of it. The service has conducted a survey of users, which received a good response, but has not contacted those who do not currently use the service to ascertain the reasons and to reduce barriers to inclusion.

23. The service has very good strategic links with a wide range of voluntary and statutory partners. Partners value the service's sustained and committed contribution to partner forums, strategic bodies and management boards. Collaboration with partners is effective in identifying needs, and in ensuring that resources are deployed efficiently to meet gaps in provision and reduce duplication.

24. The service makes effective use of the funds available to it by the local authority and pays good attention to the principles of Best Value in the deployment of resources. The good support it provides to voluntary organisations enables them to extend and enhance youth provision in the borough.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

16 April 2007



**Report of:** Joint Report of Director of Children's Services and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services

**Subject** PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORT: RAISING BOYS ACHIEVEMENT – BRIDGING THE GENDER GAP

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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum with feedback on the recommendations from their investigation into Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap, which was reported to Cabinet on 22 January 2007.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The investigation into Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap conducted by this Scrutiny Forum falls under the remit of the Children's Services Department and is, under the Executive Delegation Scheme, within the service area covered by the Children's Services Portfolio Holder.
- 2.2 On 22 January 2007, Cabinet considered the Final Report of the Children's Services Scrutiny Forum into Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap. This report provides feedback from the Portfolio Holder following the Cabinet's consideration of, and decisions in relation to this Forum's recommendations.
- 2.3 In addition to this report a further progress report will be produced for Members' consideration six months after the Final Report was considered by Cabinet to enable Members to monitor the implementation of their recommendations.

### 3. SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXECUTIVE DECISION

- 3.1 Following consideration of the Final Report, Cabinet approved the recommendations in their entirety. Details of each recommendation and

proposed actions to be taken following approval by Cabinet are provided in the Action Plan attached at **Appendix A**.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That Members note the proposed actions detailed within the Action Plan, appended to this report (**Appendix A**) and seek clarification on its content where felt appropriate.

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#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) The Children's Services Scrutiny Forum's Final Report entitled 'Raising Boys Achievement – Bridging the Gender Gap' considered by Cabinet on 22 January 2007.
- (ii) Decision Record of Cabinet held on 22 January 2007.



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

**NAME OF FORUM:** Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** Raising Boys Achievement - Bridging the Gender Gap

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** (Cabinet on 22 January 2007)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(a)	That the Authority focuses its future strategies in relation to the raising of boys' achievement levels on boys' literacy and writing;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify boys' underachievement as a key priority in both Primary and Secondary Operational Plans.</li><li>Implement specific actions as part of the primary and secondary national strategies programme which target intervention and support in underachieving pupils including boys.</li></ul>	Senior Adviser - PW (Curriculum Enrichment) GC (Secondary Strategy Co-ord) JS (Primary Strategy Co-ord) GR (Gender Achievement Co-ord)	April 07 – Mar 08
(b)	That in addition to the Authority's Children's Services Departmental Action Plans, the creation of a policy, that includes a clear timetable and future aims and objectives, in relation to the raising of boys' achievement levels in Hartlepool be further explored;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop and agree an overarching strategy for raising boys' achievement.</li><li>Agree with schools and other stakeholders including milestones for implementation.</li></ul>	PW GR	April 07 – Mar 08 Draft Strategy by Sept 07
(c)	That a review be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate staffing structure is in place for the effective 'rolling out' of the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to develop the blended learning pilot for reading.</li><li>Develop a writing pilot.</li></ul>	JS/GC – Primary and Secondary Strategy Co-ords	April 07 – Mar 08 Jan – Mar 08

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

**NAME OF FORUM:** Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** Raising Boys Achievement - Bridging the Gender Gap

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** (Cabinet on 22 January 2007)

RECOMMENDATION		EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
	Blended Learning Project across all Hartlepool schools;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brief Secondary and Primary Heads through Director's briefings and Primary / Secondary Strategy updates.</li> </ul>		Nov 07
<b>(d)</b>	That a review be undertaken to ascertain what, if anything can be done to strengthen the LS's transfer and transition arrangements, including the possible extension of use of the Transfer and Transition Self Evaluation Toolkit;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the electronic transfer of information on pupils' learning needs, dependent by increasing the ICT capacity of schools.</li> <li>Secondary schools to complete the on-line self-evaluation – monitored by LA/SIPs.</li> </ul>		Sept 07
<b>(e)</b>	That a formal process be developed for the sharing of information and best practice to assist in the raising of boys' achievement levels across all schools in Hartlepool;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop the collection and analysis of data by LA.</li> <li>Ensure underachievement by gender is a focus.</li> <li>Train schools in the use of RAISE online for tracking and interpreting data.</li> <li>Sharing good practice via SIPs and school reviews.</li> <li>Create opportunities to share good practice locally, regionally and nationally.</li> </ul>	PW / Kay Forgie (Data Manager)  KF  PW/GR	April 07 – Mar 08

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ENQUIRY ACTION PLAN

**NAME OF FORUM:** Children's Services Scrutiny Forum

**NAME OF SCRUTINY ENQUIRY:** Raising Boys Achievement - Bridging the Gender Gap

**DECISION MAKING DATE OF FINAL REPORT:** (Cabinet on 22 January 2007)

RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(f) That the feasibility of establishing a Regional Network with Local Authorities to share best practice to relation to addressing the boys' underachievement issue be explored;	Use links with Gary Wilson, Doncaster gender co-ordinator and practitioners in Sunderland to explore possibilities and share good practice.	GR	April 07 – Mar 08
(g) That ways of encouraging greater parental involvement in the education of boys' within schools across Hartlepool be explored;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a town-wide campaign to encourage parental support for pupils.</li> <li>• Develop work with schools to involve parents in their children's education and progress with particular reference to vulnerable groups.</li> <li>• Develop and establish links with other agencies.</li> </ul>	GR	April 07 – Mar 08
(h) The Authority encourages schools with low levels of boys' achievement to become involved in the National Breakthrough Programme;	Information shared with all schools on recent Breakthrough Programme publicity events.	PW	Feb 07

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RECOMMENDATION	EXECUTIVE RESPONSE / PROPOSED ACTION	LEAD OFFICER	DELIVERY TIMESCALE
(i) That the Authority explores with the National Breakthrough Programme the possibility of adopting a 'cluster' funding approach, to assist in the reduction of costs associated with participation in the programme; and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek additional resources to support participation.</li> <li>Discuss financial contributions from schools with headteachers.</li> </ul>	PW GR GC	April 07 – Mar 08
(j) That Elected Member involvement in the Primary School Enquiry Groups together with the creation of Secondary School Enquiry Groups be further explored.	Work with enquiry groups to create opportunities for elected members to participate in their work.	PW GR	April 07 – Mar 08